



Wallace is intimidated

LUTH (AP) — A 23-year-old basketball player to intimidate him was in town for a "Minutes" story about Borders, the first team to win a game in a 15 league professional. In their initial quarter Friday, Borders' pre-game state was a veteran reporter into. "She had her game on. I saw her in her room and I didn't anything to her. She said at me like I was a in her soup," Wallace

ince Charles eks treatment r memory loss

NDON (AFP) — Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, has consulted a specialist on memory loss after he has trouble remembering the names of people he meets on official engagements. The Sun newspaper reported today. "During the official engagements, he is reduced to a wide range of people and he has noticed that he forgets names. All the time, he is doing is helping a reminder of names," the paper said.

chroder places Smits 'NYPD Blue'

SW YORK (AP) — Admiring the New York City Police Department's "NYPD Blue" series, the actor placed Smits in the role of a police officer. "I've always admired the police and the way they work," he said. "I've always been a fan of the show and the way they handle the cases. I think it's a great show and I'm excited to be a part of it."

itchcock stamp offered to the public

ITCHCOCK (AP) — The U.S. Postal Service has announced that it will issue a postage stamp featuring the work of the late artist Robert Rauschenberg. The stamp will be part of a series of stamps honoring the work of the late artist. The stamp will be available for purchase starting on August 25, 1998.

laws scare sees shark on menu

THENS (AFP) — The Greek town of Pounta has been hit by a shark. The shark was seen swimming in the sea near the town. The town's residents are scared and have stopped eating fish. The town's residents are scared and have stopped eating fish.

Security Council discusses Lockerbie resolution

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Security Council would agree to suspend U.N. sanctions against Libya once two Libyan suspects in the 1988 Pan Am bombing arrive in the Netherlands for trial, according to a draft resolution Tuesday. The U.S.-British-sponsored draft also says Libya must satisfy the French judicial inquiry into another bombing, of UTA flight 772, before the sanctions are suspended. The draft circulated as the council began preliminary consultations Tuesday on a deal to try the two suspects in the Pan Am flight at The Hague using Scottish judges. The council was expected to take action on the draft within the week (See separate story).

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King receives Tarawneh, Anani



AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday received in his residence at Washington Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani, in the presence of Jordan's Ambassador in Washington Marwan Muasher.

King Hussein voiced pride in Tarawneh and his new cabinet team, reaffirming his full confidence in their ability to work hard at this stage, which requires shouldering their responsibility and dedication in the service of the nation. King Hussein said the government's decisions should be based on accuracy, integrity and objectivity. The King called for strengthening the

state of law and institutions on the basis of justice and integrity, so that no discrimination whatsoever will be made between citizens, except for their distinguished hard work and the manner in which they conduct themselves. The King stressed the need to apply rules and regulations to all people, in order for tranquility to prevail, and in order to ensure that transparency and clarity are the main characteristics of the government's performance. The King emphasized the importance of applying the

principle of reward and punishment in the way the government administration conducts its business. Prime Minister Tarawneh expressed his and his colleagues' pride and appreciation for the Royal confidence, and said his government will mobilize all its energies to implement the King's directives and guidelines, as contained in the letter of designation to the new government. Tarawneh conveyed to King Hussein the greetings of the Jordanian people and their best wishes for his complete recovery.

Libya will respond to Lockerbie trial proposal today

Agencies

LIBYA WILL respond today to a U.S.-British proposal for Scottish judges to try two Libyan suspects in the Netherlands for the 1988 Pan Am airliner bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, Libya's official JANA news agency said Tuesday.

The foreign affairs and justice ministers said their experts are "very busy studying the message sent by the U.S. and British governments via the U.N. secretary-general," the agency said, quoting an official source.

A detailed statement will be published tomorrow (Wednesday) on this subject, JANA said.

Arab League chief Esmat Abdul Meguid said Tuesday that Libya would accept the offer to try two Libyan suspects in the Lockerbie bombing 10 years ago in the Hague. Asked whether Libya may reject Monday's proposal, Abdul Meguid said: "This is not foreseeable because the

proposal is the initial Arab-Libyan proposal which they have already accepted." "The American and British offer constitutes acceptance of the Arab and Libyan position," he told reporters. "This acceptance is important because we have been seeking this solution for three years. "We still have a lot of long, hard work to do to guarantee a fair trial which protects the rights of the two Libyan suspects and this will be our next task," he added. Abdul Meguid said after a meeting with the British ambassador to Egypt, Sir David Blatherwick, that he had passed on a message from British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook to Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Al Muntasser. Blatherwick presented Abdul Meguid with details of the proposal announced on Monday to try the suspects at the International Court of Justice in the Hague before Scottish judges and under Scottish law. Abdul Meguid said the

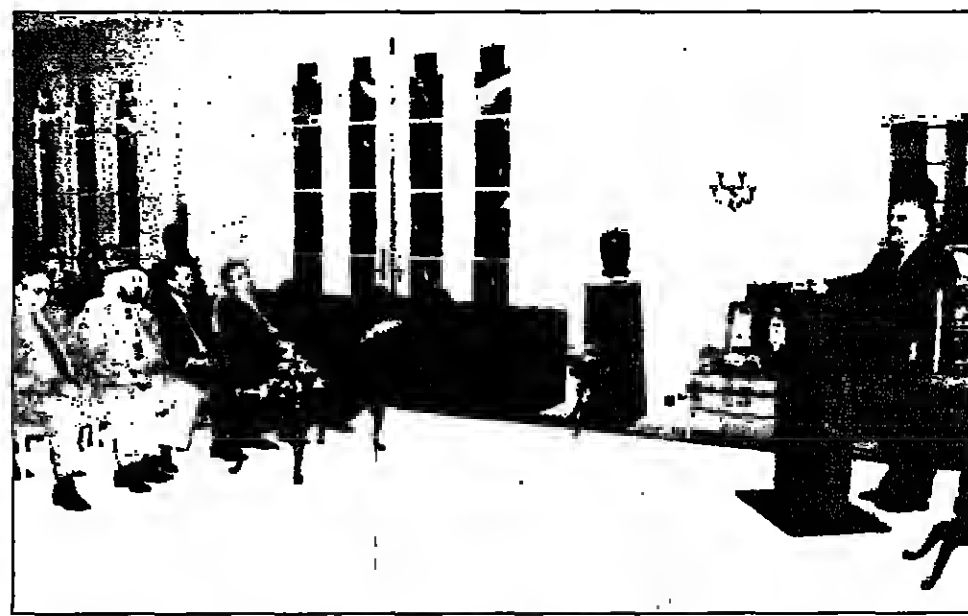
League would next hold consultations with Libya and U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan. "We must talk about everything concerning the implementation of this proposal. We want both sides to do it willingly because our goal is to put an end to this tragedy which has endured for 10 years," he said. Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has always insisted that he would hand over the two Libyans suspected of planting the bomb on the 1988 Pan Am Flight 103 on condition that they were tried in a neutral third country. The bombing killed all 259 people on the plane and 11 on the ground. The United Nations slapped an air and arms embargo on Tripoli in 1992 after its persistent refusal to hand over suspects Abdul Basat Ali Mohammad Al Megrahi and Al Amine Khalifa Fhimah. So far Libya has refrained from making any comments on the U.S.-British move, but Abdul Meguid said Washing-

ton and London had not set a time limit for a response. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stressed Monday that the plan, aimed at calling Qadhafi's bluff, was a "take it or leave it proposition" and not subject to negotiation or change. "That is a major issue that concerns us," Abdul Meguid said. The Arab League, along with other groups such as the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU), had staunchly backed Libya's request for a trial to be held outside the United States or Britain to ensure fair proceedings. Jordan on Tuesday described the U.S.-British offer as a "positive development."

"The Americans have practically agreed to the demands made by Libya for years to have the two suspected tried in a third country," Information Minister Nasser Judeh told reporters in Amman.

Regent chairs discussion on CDD spending priorities

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday chaired a meeting at the Royal Court dedicated to determining the spending priorities of the Civil Defence Department (CDD) for the coming year. The meeting, which is part of a series of preliminary discussions on priorities in state spending before the preparation of the 1999 fiscal budgets was attended by a number of concerned ministers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai Kaabneh and heads of the Civil Defence, Public Security and General Intelligence Departments.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, talks to ministers and officials at the Royal Court on Tuesday, during a meeting discussing the Civil Defence Department's spending priorities (Photo by Boghos)

In remarks at the meeting, the Regent underlined the importance of determining the priorities in defence within a general integrated plan involving the relevant departments and in a manner that would secure means to enable them perform their duties in safeguarding security and stability and ensure continued development of the economic and investment environment in Jordan. The Regent stressed the importance of the CDD's role in safeguarding the industrial, social and economic environment. Discussion of the priorities in civil defence spending means discussing the needs of the Jordanian society and the economic sectors, Prince Hassan said, noting that the civil defence operation has direct effect on society while its precautionary measures have a positive effect on social and economic sectors. Prince Hassan listened to a briefing by the CDD Director Major General M'aani about the department's duties and priorities in defence spending. M'aani noted that the CDD's needs have been growing with respect to the growth in population and urban and economic development pointing out that the CDD strives to ensure preventive measures to guarantee industrial and environmental security. Ministers and officers present at the meeting had

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an open discussion on the issue. Prince Hassan had earlier made it clear that the 1999 fiscal budget will be based on a scientific, objective and practical approach involving the state's different sectors. He has called on the public and private sectors to participate in a dialogue to determine the priorities in spending in a manner that would guarantee the most ideal way in utilising resources.

Press ordered not to publish news on water crisis

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amman's Prosecutor General Mohammed Kharabsheh on Tuesday ordered the media to refrain from publishing news relating to the water crisis. Kharabsheh asked the Director of Press and Publications Department Bilal Tal to "inform all newspapers not to publish any news item involving the water pollution case until the prosecution concluded its investigation." Earlier this week, the government forwarded the report of the committee investigating the water crisis to the prosecutor general so that legal action

may be taken against the parties responsible. The 100-page report on the water crisis was prepared by a government committee formed Aug. 4 on orders from the Regent. The details of the report were not released. Nasser Judeh, minister of information, yesterday said the water pollution file is in the hands of the prosecutor general to decide what action should be taken against the responsible parties. "If the government had made the report public before the prosecutor general's decision, some people mentioned in the report would have sued

the government for defamation," Judeh told a press conference. He added the investigation committee did not have the authority to prosecute people and was only acting as "a fact-finding body." Judeh said Hani Mulki, minister of water and energy, will soon report on the situation at Zai Water Treatment Plant (ZWP). He gave no further details. Mulki said last Saturday the government hopes that the water situation will be back to normal as soon as possible. Officials at the Ministry of Water were not available for comment.

Arafat leaves Oslo but officials continue talks

OSLO (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat left Oslo on Tuesday but Israeli and Palestinian officials continued marathon talks in a bid to get the deadlocked peace process back on track, sources close to the talks said.

The 100 sides met from Monday night into the early hours of Tuesday morning and resumed early again on Tuesday, but it is too early to speak of a breakthrough, sources who asked not to be identified said.

The talks ended about 4:30 a.m. on Tuesday and resumed again around 8:00 a.m. Arafat left the Norwegian capital before noon, after meeting with U.S. special envoy to the Middle East Dennis Ross behind closed doors at the Holmenkollen Hotel.

On Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said publicly for the first time that he was ready to accept conditionally a U.S. package proposal centred on Israel transferring an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank to full or partial Palestinian control over a period of 12 weeks.

The Israeli offer would designate three per cent of the land to be ceded as "nature reserves" where Israel would retain full security and policing powers or somewhere else," one official told the Norwegian news agency NTB. Arafat called the proposal "a beginning." Norwegian officials and Ross are reportedly helping to bring the Israelis and Palestinians in direct contact in a bid to revive the peace process, which has been stalled for 17 months. "The talks will continue, but it is premature to say whether that will be in Oslo

would build new homes for the 450 Jews living in the divided city of 130,000 Palestinians. "I care. I want them [settlers] to have security and permanency and expansion and they deserve it," Netanyahu said. He said proposals to build permanent housing in the Jewish enclave of Tel Rameida, a small trailer park where the rabbi was killed last week, were submitted for approval Tuesday. Netanyahu also approved the construction of an apartment building for settlers next to the enclave of Beit Hadassah, the Yediot Ahronot daily said. Land next to Beit Hadassah was recently cleared for construction. Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman, meanwhile, has set aside \$2.7 million for Tel Rameida construction, and on Monday Parliament's Finance Ministry approved an additional \$24.2 million for settlement expansion throughout the West Bank.

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monies on Monday afternoon, both Ross and other key Middle East players stressed that differences between the two sides have narrowed over the past few days. "We believe that peace will finally prevail," Arafat stressed in a speech on Monday. Ross expressed the common belief that "there is no alternative to the Oslo peace accords."

Security Council takes no decision on Sudan probe

Agencies

SUDANESE RELIEF workers were counting the cost on Tuesday of the U.S. attack on a Khartoum pharmaceutical plant which supplies the lion's share of medicines to the famine-stricken country. Belkheir Abdallah Yagoub, deputy commissioner of the state-run Humanitarian Aid Commission, said the factory supplied 70 per cent of the drug needs of southern, eastern and western Sudan which is wracked by famine and disease. "This situation will place a tremendous pressure on other local plants which are not in a position to meet the drug requirements," Yagoub told the Akhbar Assar newspaper.

He said Sudan would have to resort to importing expensive medicines to make up for the "much less expensive" products of the Al Shifa plant, destroyed in a U.S. missile attack on Thursday that also left one person dead and seven wounded. The U.S. claims the factory produced an ingredient used in lethal VX nerve gas but Sudan says it was solely used for pharmaceutical production. But Yagoub said Germany's decision to suspect aid flights to southern Sudan after the missile strike would not hamper the progress of relief operations there. Aid agencies estimate that 2.5 million people risk starvation in southern Sudan because of the 15-year civil war, with the situation compounded by recent flooding. He said there were many planes operated by the U.N. and other organisations as well as trains and river boats that deliver food to the needy in south Sudan. A delegation of Egyptian opposition parties arrived here

on Monday to see for themselves the damage inflicted on the drug factory, amid continuing Sudanese claims that the attack was carried out by U.S. planes from Egypt. Ali Al Haj Mohammad, deputy secretary general of Sudan's ruling National Congress, said U.S. aircraft were seen Thursday night taking off from an Egyptian military base on the Red Sea coast. Sudan "reserves its right to retaliate," Mohammad said at a public meeting on Monday, Al Ushu newspaper reported. Egyptian President Hosni

Mubarak on Monday denied his country was used for the strikes, saying "our territory can never be used to attack another state." Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir, whose country has rocky ties with its northern neighbour, said he hoped U.S. planes "had not taken off from Egypt." On Monday the U.N. Security Council took no decision on a Sudanese request for a U.N. investigation to verify that a factory destroyed by U.S. missiles produced chemical arms. The lack of reaction came as the U.S. delegation expressed opposition to the fact-finding mission proposal and justified the missile strikes saying that the targeted group had links to 18 terrorist actions in recent years. "It was felt that more time is needed for reflection on this matter," Security Council President Danilo Turk told reporters after the closed-door session. The council discussions focused on a letter from the Sudanese government asking

Arab delegate to Security Council: We need to know the truth before taking any steps

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only U.S. Charge D'affaires Peter Burleigh — whose country holds veto power — and Bahrain Ambassador Jassim Buslayal spoke about the Sudanese request. "I don't seek what the purpose of the fact-finding study would be," Burleigh told reporters afterwards. "We have credible information that fully justifies the strike we made on that one facility in Khartoum." According to diplomats, he told the council that the Osama Ben Laden group targeted by Thursday's U.S. cruise missile attacks on the Sudanese factory and alleged terrorist bases in Afghanistan had been linked to 18 other terrorist attacks. These included, he said, last November's tourist massacre in Luxor, Egypt, the 1995 assassination attempt on Mubarak, the plot to kill Pope John Paul II, 1993 attacks on U.N. forces in Somalia and the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing. Wash-

ington struck the Khartoum factory after Ben Laden's group attempted to acquire chemical weapons from the plant, he added. Burleigh noted that Washington had informed the council in writing last Thursday that the missile attacks were carried out in self-defence in line with Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. The U.S. letter said that the attacks were in retaliation for the August 7 bombings of two U.S. embassies in east Africa that killed 257 people, including 12 Americans. The Bahraini delegate, representing Arab states on the council, said that time was needed for reflection. "We need to know the truth before taking any steps," he was quoted as saying. Chinese deputy permanent representative, Shen Guofang, told reporters that Washington should provide evidence of its charges about the production of a VX ingredient at Al Shifa. Burleigh said that making evidence available to other governments was something Washington would have to "keep under consideration." Asked whether the other council members believed the U.S. claims against Khartoum, Turk replied: "I don't think that this is a conclusion which can be made on the basis of the very short discussion that took place."

"I am not in a position to make any specific, substantive conclusion at this stage. I think we have to wait and see what comes up in the coming days," he said. On Tuesday the New York Times claimed that Iraq was helping the pharmaceutical factory in Sudan produce components of the nerve agent VX. (Continued on page 3)

Mubarak denies Egyptian role in U.S. raid on Sudan

CAIRO (IR) — Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak has denied that U.S. planes used Egyptian territory from which to launch last week's attack in Sudan.

Mubarak was responding late on Monday to what he said was an accusation by Sudan President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir that Egyptian bases were used for a U.S. missile strike on a Khartoum factory last Thursday.

"Sudan's accusations show ignorance. It is a false statement that planes raided Sudan from a northerly direction," Mubarak said. "Egyptian territories are not used for aggres-

sion against any country. They [the Sudanese] know it very well."

Bashir said on Friday American forces "shot seven Tomahawk missiles, six of which hit the factory and one hit outside." He said four American planes "broke the sound barrier" as they flew parallel to the Nile during the Thursday night attack. He did not mention any country by name, but his comments were interpreted by Cairo as implying Egypt allowed planes to fly from Egyptian territories.

The United States has said the attack was launched by cruise missiles from ships in

the Red Sea against the Al Shifa pharmaceutical factory, alleging it produced components for chemical weapons. Sudan said the factory produced only medicines.

Sudanese Ambassador to Egypt Ahmed Abdul Halim on Monday also said Egypt played no part in the U.S. strikes.

"Egypt's role in the U.S. raids is what is written in the Arab League's statement," he said, referring to Egypt's and other members' support in the Cairo-based league for Sudan's call for the United Nations to investigate the U.S. strikes.

Iran brands U.S. attacks as 'state terrorism'

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday blasted the U.S. strikes on Afghanistan and Sudan as criminal acts of "state terrorism."

The attacks on sites linked to suspected Saudi-born terrorist leader Osama Bin Laden were in retaliation for the August 7 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in which 257 people died, including 12 Americans.

"I do not know Osama Bin Laden and I do not condone killing local and civilian people in Tanzania and Kenya, but the military action of the U.S. against Sudan and Afghanistan is as much condemnable as killing civilians in Kenya and Tanzania," Khamenei said at a cabinet meeting.

"It is not acceptable that a government relying on its military might attack another country and kill its innocent people," he said, describing last Thursday's attacks as "state terrorism," the official IRNA news agency reported.

The U.S. missile strikes simultaneously hit a pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum that Washington claims was making chemical weapons, and bases in Afghanistan it says was linked to Bin Laden.

The U.S. delegation to the U.N. Security Council on Monday that Ben Laden's network was linked to 18 terrorist attacks in recent years.

Iran holds funeral for assassinated prison chief

TEHRAN (AFP) — Several thousand people attended a funeral in front of the Iranian parliament on Tuesday for the country's former prison chief Assadollah Lajevardi who was assassinated two days ago.

The crowd shouted slogans against the People's Mujahedeen, Iran's main armed opposition group which claimed responsibility for the attack on Lajevardi in his shop in Tehran bazaar.

Two other people were also shot dead in the attack. Iranian media has paid homage to Lajevardi, 63, as a "hero of the Islamic resistance" because of his fierce struggle against the shah, Iran's former monarch who was toppled in the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Tehran bazaar closed as a mark of respect on Tuesday and many merchants took part in the ceremony.

The three coffins were wrapped in the Iranian flag and paraded on top of a truck which passed in front of the assembly building in central Tehran.

Parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, who attended the funeral, said Lajevardi "withstood the toughest acts of torture before the revolution."

"After the revolution he took on very difficult and dangerous positions," he said, referring to the posts Lajevardi served in as the director of the notorious Evin prison in Tehran and as a revolutionary prosecutor.

"He foiled innovative plots by the Mujahedeen [by-ones] and made the country unsafe for them," the speaker said, referring to the Iraqi-based Mujahedeen. "The Mujahedeen's move was the stupidest thing to do and it was no military feat."

Nateq-Nouri criticised European countries for "offering haven to the terrorist Mujahedeen while at the same time paying lip service to the issue of human rights."

"Our people cannot ignore such a contradiction. This attitude will affect relations between Iran and European countries," he warned.



GROUNDING TANKER IN BOSPHORUS: The Greek-flagged tanker Crudegulf, loaded with crude oil, Tuesday sits grounded in Istanbul's Bosphorus Straits under the silhouettes of Topkapi Palace (R) and St. Sophia, which was converted to a mosque and is now a museum. The 81,000-tonne tanker ran aground offshore from the Ottoman Topkapi Palace, en route from Russia to Italy via the Turkish straits. There were no reports of any oil spill (Reuters photo)

Iraqi FM leaves for South Africa

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al-Sahhaf left Baghdad on Tuesday for South Africa to discuss preparations for a summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, the official INA news agency said.

The summit is due to begin next weekend in Durban attended by some 60 heads of state.

Sahhaf, who is accompanied by an Iraqi delegation, will explain Iraq's decision to suspend cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors and its "legitimate demands for a lifting of the embargo," INA said. Baghdad announced

August 5 that it would suspend cooperation with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with dismantling Iraq until the organisation is restructured and removed from U.S. influence.

Iraq has accused UNSCOM of being a "stooge" of the United States and deliberately aiming to perpetuate the eight-year embargo imposed on Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait.

The embargo can only be lifted once UNSCOM certifies that Iraq no longer has biological, chemical or nuclear weapons or missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres.

Iraqi newspaper calls for holy war against United States

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An official Iraqi newspaper called for jihad or holy war against the United States on Tuesday following Washington's missile attacks on suspected Islamist sites in Sudan and Afghanistan.

"Arabs, Muslims and the whole international community are called on to take action and mobilise into one front to wage jihad against the American tyrant and hit its interests," said Babel, owned by the eldest son of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Uday.

"We want an active front capable of creating programmes and measures to hit the U.S.-Zionist interests and strike them a severe blow," the daily said.

"We want a jihad against terrorism, evil and heresy," the newspaper said, branding the United States a "bad example" of a superpower and its president a "liar."

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Kuwait, U.S. cooperating to fight 'terrorism'

KUWAIT (AP) — Kuwait and the United States are cooperating to fight terrorism, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, the crown prince, said in remarks published Tuesday.

Sheikh Saad, who serves as prime minister, spoke in response to U.S. press reports alleging that Kuwaiti Islamic charity organisations had links with terrorists responsible for the Aug. 7 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Kuwait and Washington are cooperating in the fight against terrorism and the two governments are "exchanging information," he told the Al Rai Al Amn daily.

Turkish Islamist leader still in mentor Erbakan's shadow

By Steve Bryant
Reuters

ANKARA — Recai Kutan, the staid and softly spoken Turkish Islamist leader charged with embezzlement on Tuesday, still lives in the giant shadow cast by his predecessor Necmettin Erbakan, indicted alongside him.

When he became the Islamist Virtue Party in May, Kutan inherited control of the best vote-gathering machine in Turkey, a network of activists and fund-raisers that had been assembled by Erbakan over 30 years.

But the rise of political

Islam in Turkey has been hampered at every step by the secular establishment and the military, which fears a drift toward an Islamic regime such as Iran's.

Both men were formally accused on Tuesday of embezzling funds from the Welfare Party, a charge that carries a possible three-year sentence, to spirit them out of the authorities' reach when the party was banned.

"It is clear that the party's leadership carried out the highest fraud in the history of our republic to prevent the treasury seizing the party's funds and goods," an indictment

prepared by the country's top prosecutor read.

Erbakan was barred from political leadership for five years by the constitutional court in January when it outlawed Welfare for attempting to introduce Islamic law in secular Turkey.

Islamist elders appointed the 68-year-old Kutan, a long-time Erbakan loyalist from the conservative wing of the movement, to head Welfare's successor, the Islam-based Virtue Party, still the biggest grouping in parliament and the main opposition in conservative Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz.

Kutan denies any official links to his predecessor.

"Virtue is a new party, it has nothing to do with Welfare," he told Reuters in an interview in July. "For example, they opposed Turkey's European Union membership. But we support it and say it is for the benefit of the country."

Kutan has sought to distance himself further from Welfare by attending parties serving alcohol — not drunk by pious Muslims — and saying his party might field women candidates in a general election next April.

But many observers still say Kutan, who has spent

25 years in Turkish politics as a loyal and unspectacular member of Erbakan's team, may be little more than a caretaker, marking time until his political master can return to reclaim official leadership.

Notably, Kutan's appointment blocked the rise of Istanbul Mayor Recep Tayyip Erdogan, seen as the leader of a younger and more dynamic wing of the Islamist movement. While Erdogan is popular with the grassroots, Erbakan loyalists dominate the party executive.

Erbakan narrowly won an election in 1995 to become Turkey's first Islamist prime minister, and formed a coalition with conservatives.

But the fiercely secularist army forced him from office last year for loudly attempting to boost the role of religion in public life.

Now Kutan paints next April's election as a crucial test of whether Turkish democracy is robust enough for the powerful military to allow the Islamists to enter government again if they repeat their success of the last election.

"Does Turkey have a democratic order or does it have another kind of

order? What is more important than elections is whether the result will be respected or not. Whether there will be democracy or not," Kutan said.

A civil engineer, by training, Kutan served in 1977 as housing minister and in 1996 as energy minister, winning plaudits for his mastery of technical details.

He has displayed similar skills in his leadership of Virtue, eschewing Erbakan's fiery rhetoric in favour of efficient opposition in parliament and committees.

He is married with three children.

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Mr. Bogus Show
15:30 Children's Programme
— Halfway to Cross the Galaxy and Turn Left
16:00 The Album Show
17:00 Doc. — Ushuaia
18:15 Acapulco Bay
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Science Magazine — E-Mis
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Comedy — Keeping Mum
20:00 Doc. — Emoy Special Magazine
20:30 Faces and Places
21:10 Kung Fu
22:00 News in English
22:30 Chicago Hope
23:59 Drama — Bugs (Ep. 1)
01:00 End of T.N.

PRAYER TIMES

04:40 Fajr
06:02 Sunrise/Duha
12:37 Dhuhur
16:15 Asr
19:13 Maghreb
20:35 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweidieh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4632580
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

4624853/4624811. St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751. Amman International Church Tel. 5865897. German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5685404. The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811205. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932. St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757. Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440. Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138. The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052. The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331. The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261.	and seas calm. Amman19/35 Aqaba26/39 Deserts18/38 Jordan Valley24/40 Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 34, Aqaba 39 Humidity readings: Amman 25 per cent, Aqaba 48 per cent. Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas: Ajloun29 Jerash37 U'm Qays36 Madaba35 Petra38 Dead Sea43	USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY Dr. Youssef Rashid4875792 Dr. Jon'a Abu Dhiab4758848 Dr. Ahmad Manna5359413 Dr. Walid Al Masri5675485 Firas pharmacy5661912 Al Asema pharmacy4637055 Al Salam pharmacy4636730 Yacoub pharmacy4644945 Shmeisai pharmacy4637660 Nairokh pharmacy4623672 Najib pharmacy5347632 IRIBID: Dr. Issam Salih246858 Al Quds pharmacy—	ZARQA: Dr. Walid Halaseh982799 Khalifeh pharmacy985417 EMERGENCIES Food Control Centre4637111 Civil Defence Department 5661111 Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341 Civil Defence Emergency199 Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777 Fire Brigade4617111 Blood Bank4775121 Highway Police5343402 Traffic Police4896304 Public Security Dept.4630321 Hotel Complaints5605800 Price Complaints5661176 Water & Sewage Complaints4767467 Amman Municipality Complaints4787111 Telephone Information (directory assistance)121 Overseas Calls010230 Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101 Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101 Jordan Television4773111 Radio Jordan4774111 Water Authority5680100 J. Electricity Authority5815615 Electric Power Co.4636381 RJ Flight Information 44-53204 Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53204	cial Surgery5921109 The Islamic, Abdi56601317 Husseini Medical Centre Tel. 585856 Luzmin4630195 Khulidi Maternity4644281/6 Akileh Maternity4642441/2 Jabal Amman Maternity4642362 Mallus, J. Amman4636140 Fulasse, Shmervani5607071 Shmervani Hospital5669131 University Hospital5353444 Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9 Al-Ahli, Abdi56641646 balan, Al-Muhajreen 4771111/3 Al-Bashir4775111/26 Army, Marka4801611/5 Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50 Amal Hospital5674155 ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital10978323 Zarqa National Hospital109490561 Ibu Sina Hospital109486732 Al Hikma Modern Hospital10999099 IRIBID: Princess Basma Hospital102275555 Greek Catholic Hospital102272275 Ibn Al Nafes Hospital102247100 AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital 103814111	FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 144153200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44-532501. ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights 07:30Damascus (RJ) 09:30Jeddah (RJ) 09:45Larnaca (RJ) 09:55Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ) 10:45Doha, Bahrain (RJ) 15:55New York, Amsterdam (RJ) 17:30Madrid (RJ) 18:05Istanbul (RJ) 18:05Paris (RJ) 18:40Brussels, Geneva (RJ) 19:05Rome (RJ) 19:10London, Vienna (RJ) 19:25Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ) 19:30Chicago, Brussels (add) (RJ) 20:00Tel Aviv (add) (RJ) 00:15Beirut (RJ) 00:55Dubai (add) (RJ) 01:05Cairo (RJ) 05:00Riyadh (add) (RJ) Other Flights 09:00Riyadh (add) (SV) 11:00Sanaa, Hudaidah (IY) 11:30Kuwait (KU) 12:30Jeddah (SV) 12:45Bahrain (add) (GF) 13:15Cairo (M5) 14:10Tunis (TU) 14:10Bahrain (GF) 15:05Vienna (OS) 16:10Dubai, Abu Dhabi (EK) 16:30Algiers (AH) 18:35Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK) 18:40Beirut (ME) 19:05Frankfurt (LH) 23:20Istanbul (TK) 23:40Amsterdam (KL) 00:15London (BA) 02:25Athens, Beirut (OA) 05:15Antalia (TK) Other Flights 06:35Larnaca (CY) 07:30Paris (AF) 09:20London (BA) 10:30Riyadh (add) (SV) 11:30Ta'iz, Sanaa (IY) 12:45Kuwait (KU) 13:35Bahrain (add) (GF) 14:00Jeddah (SV) 14:15Cairo (MS) 15:00Bahrain, Muscat (GF) 15:10Tunis (TU) 15:50Vienna (OS) 17:20Sharjah (AH) 17:20Dubai (EK) 20:00Beirut (RJ) 20:30Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK) 23:55Beirut (RJ) 00:40Damascus, Amsterdam (LH) 03:45Beirut, Athens (OA) Other Flights 08:00Agaba (from Marka Airport) (RW) 09:30Agaba (from Marka Airport) (RW) 17:30Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW) 22:50Agaba (from QALA) (RW)
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Assaulted

By Alta Shukri Hamzeh
Jordan Times

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian government has confirmed on Monday that it planned no foreign aid changes and said it would continue attempts to improve relations with Arab countries. It said they are based on mutual respect.

Speaking at a press conference, Information Minister Jawad Juhayr said relations with Arab countries are a priority. But he added that Jordan falls on Jordan to take the "first step" in improving relations with other Arab states. Juhayr also said that Jordan will continue to work in support of Palestinian rights and that significant agreements between Palestinians and Israelis have been implemented.

His Majesty King Hussein's letter of designation of a new Prime Minister Fayez Tarhini, serving as Prime Minister, is a step towards the new government's commitment to domestic issues, he said.

"[The] focus on domestic affairs as contained in the letter of designation does not mean that it will be at the expense of foreign affairs and relations with Arab and other countries, since Jordan's position with regards to foreign policies remains unchanged," Juhayr said.

What was the first of a series of weekly press briefings.

Conservation

By Hasher Majokas
Social in the Jordan Times

AMMAN — BirdLife International, a global conservation organization, has announced a project to conserve the Jordanian and regional bird species and their habitats. The project aims to protect the country's rich bird life and its habitats, which are home to many rare and endangered species.

The Jordanian-based organization is part of a Middle East regional project to develop a regional bird checklist and to protect the country's rich bird life and its habitats, which are home to many rare and endangered species.

The project is part of a global effort to conserve the world's bird life and its habitats, which are home to many rare and endangered species.

The project is part of a global effort to conserve the world's bird life and its habitats, which are home to many rare and endangered species.

What's going on

Single 2 Jungle" at the Aqaba on Thursday Aug. 27 at 7:30 p.m. The film "Waterproof" will be shown at 8:00 p.m. in the same hall.

On the National Band of the Jordanian Air Force, the band will perform at 7:00 p.m. in the same hall.

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'Government to work for improved ties with other Arab countries'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government reaffirmed on Monday its policy of no foreign policy changes and said it would continue attempts to improve ties with Arab countries provided they are based on mutual respect.

Speaking at a press conference, Information Minister Nasser Judeh said relations with Arab countries are a priority. But he added that the burden falls on Jordan to take the "first step" in improving ties with other Arab states.

Judeh also said that the Kingdom will continue to work in support of Palestinian rights and that signed agreements between the Palestinians and Israelis have to be implemented.

His Majesty King Hussein's letter of designation to new Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, serving as guidelines to the new government, concentrated on domestic issues, he said.

"But the focus on domestic affairs as contained in the letter of designation does not mean that it will be at the expense of foreign affairs and our relations with Arab and foreign countries, since Jordan's position with regards to its foreign policies remain unchanged as the principles remain unchanged," Judeh said.

In what was the first of a series of weekly press brief-



Information Minister Nasser Judeh gestures during yesterday's press conference (Petra photo)

ings, Judeh appealed to journalists to have faith in the government's good intentions in implementing the new press and publications law, now awaiting endorsement by Royal Decree.

"Have a positive outlook," Judeh told reporters yesterday. The minister recently said the government was likely to favour a soft implementation of the highly restrictive press law, but called on journalists to act

responsibly. "You have the right to criticise the government. This is your job, but do it constructively," he urged. "Criticise our policies."

Judeh also said journalists could count on a more open relationship with the government during his assignment as information minister, saying that "putting journalists in the picture of what is happening with the government" is part of his mandate.

However, the minister indicated that it will be some time before the public is made aware of parties responsible for the current water crisis.

"Until someone is proven guilty, no names can be published," Judeh said, adding that the water report now in the hands of the government had not been passed to the press because it contained names of allegedly responsible public figures.

Government to sell donated UAE water at market prices

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government said Tuesday it will sell one million litres of bottled water donated by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to help citizens cope with soaring demand caused by the seven-week water contamination crisis.

Mohammad Smadi, secretary general of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Supply, said proceeds from the sale would be used to import bottled water to meet local demand.

Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahayan, the crown prince of the UAE emirate of Abu Dhabi, last Monday offered one million litres of water to the Kingdom to help it cope with the water crisis.

Smadi said the whole

donation will arrive within two days but will be sold on the market after quality tests are conducted to ensure the water meets local specifications.

"Then, the mineral water will be sold at the same price as imported Saudi and Syrian bottled water," Smadi told the Jordan Times.

The retail price of 1.5 litres of mineral water imported from Saudi Arabia and Syria has been fixed at 300 fils and at JD3.120 per box of 12 bottles, higher than local bottled water, which sells at JD3 per 12 bottles.

The 12-packs of water will be sold to the public for JD3.600.

Retail sales of one million and 1.4 million litres of bottled water imported from Saudi Arabia and

Syria respectively began this week after a week-long delay caused by local quality tests.

Officials were not available to give a price quotation for the ministry's bulk purchase from Saudi and Syria and for the import tax it paid.

Citizens began flocking to designated state-run stores on Sunday to buy water imported by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply after a decades-old ban was eased.

The government's decision to import water has angered Jordan's five water bottling companies, with overall investments of JD15 million, who fear about their future once the water crisis ends.

However, the ministry has assured them it will

stop imports once the crisis is solved.

The ministry decided to import water after residents complained that several traders were stockpiling local bottled water in sell it later at black market rates or were selling them smuggled bottled water at high prices.

The water pollution crisis erupted in early July after residents of western Amman complained of foul-smelling and discoloured tap water supplies.

Several areas have been without domestic water supplies for over five weeks as officials work on improving the handling process at the Zai Water Treatment Plant (ZWP), which supplies Amman with 40 per cent of its needs.

Jordan-Lebanon agricultural accord draws criticism from exporters

By Mohammad Ben Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A Jordanian-Lebanese accord regulating agricultural exchanges has generated a barrage of criticism from local exporters who claim it is tilted in favour of Beirut.

Kheir Edin Shukri, head of the Jordan Society for Agricultural Exports (JSAE), said the protocol allows Lebanon to export farm produce to Jordan at any time but restricts imports of local agricultural commodities to the Lebanese market demand.

The accord, renewable on a yearly basis, also overlooks Jordan's minimum farm export capacity, he added.

Diplomats from the Lebanese embassy were not immediately available for comment on the agreement, which took effect on Tuesday.

"The Lebanese side did not give us space to negotiate," Shukri told the Jordan Times on Monday. "It was either we take the deal or we leave it."

"The protocol will have a negative impact on the local market and farmers will be harmed, as prices of agricultural produce will fluctuate," said Shukri.

But a government official defended the pact.

Salem Lawzi, director general of the Agricultural

Marketing Organisation (AMO), said the deal, reached last month, will protect the interests of both Jordanian and Lebanese farmers.

"The agreement will help regulate prices in the Jordanian market by exporting surplus farm produce to Lebanon," he said.

"Jordan's high-quality agricultural goods are produced during the winter season when Lebanon is in need of them," Lawzi added.

Shukri, however, said the agreement would allow Lebanon to flood the Jordanian market with produce in low demand.

"For example, there is a shipment of Lebanese potatoes en route to Amman. Once the accord takes effect, the Jordanian market will be saturated with Lebanese potatoes and Jordanian potatoes will get stuck in the market," said Shukri.

The protocol regulates bilateral agricultural exchanges during winter and summer depending on the actual needs of both countries.

Many Jordanian farmers, already hit by a drop in their exports to other traditional markets in the Gulf, said the protocol was unfair because Lebanon had the upper hand in talks.

"The Lebanese were in a better negotiating position

because Lebanese products enjoy wider markets in the Arab World," said Shukri.

While Jordanian farm products are exported to the Gulf in summer and to Lebanon in winter, Lebanon has agricultural quota agreements with Libya, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Under the Jordanian-Lebanese accord, teams from both countries will meet twice a year to review their agricultural needs and to amend provisions of the protocol accordingly.

Jordan normally exports to Lebanon produce grown in winter in the Jordan Valley, Jordan's main food basket. It also exports watermelons in summer.

Amman imports cherries, potatoes and apples.

Lawzi said Jordan was importing 20,000 tonnes of farm produce from Lebanon a year and exporting 50,000 tonnes to Lebanon — around 70 per cent of Jordan's total agricultural exports.

The Jordan-Lebanon quota system was highlighted earlier this year when 100 trucks loaded with watermelons were stuck at the Lebanese border for 14 days because the cargo exceeded the agreed quantities.

Jordan criticised Lebanon for banning the entry of the 2,700-tonne shipment, and the truck drivers were forced to return to Amman.

Sixth Science Week to open Sept. 1

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) will open the sixth national Science Week on September 1 under the title "A strategy for Developing Human Resources."

"The strategy of the week-long conference will cover three areas: first, the educational system; second, organising professional labour, the labour market and industrial policies; and third, planning, management and funding human resources," said Munther Masri, chairperson of the National Centre for the Development of Human Resources.

The conference will be held under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, president of the HCST.

Around 200 participants are expected to take part in the conference, said Masri.

Representatives from the private and the public sectors as well as NGOs and members of regional and international organisations will take part in the conference.

Discussion at the conference will focus on studies by the Royal Scientific Society on educational and labour policies, according to a statement issued by the HCST.

Masri said the recommendations of the conference will be implemented in the upcoming national conference on unemployment, which is scheduled for late September.

"We expect that the Cabinet will adopt the results of the conference as a reference for any party doing work related to the development of human resources," said Masri.

Assaulted journalist critical following surgery

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The chief editor of a local Arabic weekly underwent surgery Tuesday morning for what his paper described as complications following an assault he was subjected to two weeks ago.

Al-Mithaq Managing Editor Abdulhadi Al-Kumman yesterday said Chief Editor Nasser Hattar was hospitalised last Wednesday after suffering from severe abdominal pains.

Rumour told the Jordan Times that Hattar first underwent surgery Thursday after doctors found that he had a clot in his intestines "as a result of the strong blows he received on his head, stomach and back on August 8".

He added that Hattar had a similar operation Tuesday,

saying that doctors removed around 200 cm of his small intestine in both operations.

The operating surgeon, however, stated that while the injuries Hattar sustained in the assault could have resulted in the clots, other factors may have been responsible for his hospitalisation.

"He had many bruises on his body, which could be a factor that caused the clots," said Nasser Hattar. "But the trauma happened a while ago, and it is not certain that this is the reason."

Muammar told the Jordan Times that Hattar had two episodes of thrombosis (clotting) that required the removal of two parts of his small bowel.

"The first operation last Thursday was a major one in which we removed a big clot

from the vessels," he said.

Muammar said he removed around three feet of Hattar's small bowel and that Hattar is still in critical but stable condition.

"I operated on him Tuesday and he is stable and his vital signs are so far excellent," Muammar said.

Hattar, a leftist and a vehement critic of past and recent governments, was attacked on August 8 by four unidentified assailants wielding batons as he was returning to his house in Jabal Hussein with his wife and eight-year-old son.

He survived several times on the head until he lost consciousness.

Hattar told the Jordan Times following the attack that he was unable to identify his attackers, but he issued a statement on Aug. 9 accusing four

separate parties of masterminding the assault.

According to a statement issued yesterday by Al Mithaq, Hattar was still listed in critical condition in Luzzmila Hospital. It added that "despite official complaints to the police, Hattar's wife and children as well as Al Mithaq staff are still being followed by suspicious cars."

"Jordan's security and stability and the safety of its citizens are threatened by such outlaws who do not fear punishment," said the statement.

It also called on the government to put an end to such attacks on journalists and determine the identity of the "hired assassins" who carried out the attack on Hattar.

A government official yesterday said police are still searching for the assailants.

Conservation group developing strategy to protect birds

By Hasher Majoka
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — BirdLife International, the world's oldest bird conservation society, is working with Jordanian and regional public agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to protect the diverse bird species forming an important part of the area's natural heritage.

The London-based organisation recently set up its Middle East headquarters in Amman to develop a regional strategy to help protect migratory birds. Her Majesty Queen Noor is honorary president of BirdLife International.

"Birds inhabit different habitats and ecosystems as they live in the deserts, in the mountains, in wetlands, in the coastal areas and in dense forests, and a large number of bird species migrate over very long distances," Adrian Budieri, head of BirdLife Middle East, told the Jordan Times.

"This makes them an ideal instrument of information about their habitats," he added.

Such information can prove vital to ensuring the survival of these species and provide basic clues to causes of environmental degradation and measures to rectify the situation, Budieri said in a recent

interview.

Since bird habitats and migratory routes span across borders, there is a strong need for a joint coordinated regional strategy to tackle problems facing bird habitats, he explained.

This prompted BirdLife International to decentralise its operations and set up regional offices to coordinate worldwide preservation efforts, Budieri said.

The agency's overall strategy in the region entails setting up more nature reserves while increasing the capacity of its partners through raising environmental awareness among the public, Budieri said.

"We also need to streamline and coordinate national plans with regional plans and strategies with international objectives," he added.

Jordan was chosen as headquarters for the entire Middle East region as well as Iran and Afghanistan because of its central location and its long history of environmental conservation and legislation.

The late King Abdullah, grandfather of His Majesty King Hussein, issued a decree banning deforestation in 1923.

Budieri said BirdLife International Middle East and its local partner, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), has launched five bird reserves in

Jordan. Plans for setting up a sixth reserve in Aqaba are under way.

The northeastern oasis city of Azraq, a key stop-over for many migrant birds, is home to the Azraq Wetland Reserve and the Sharmayia Wildlife Reserve.

The others include Zubia Wildlife Reserve in Ajloun and Dana and Mujib in the south.

Budieri said BirdLife Middle East is also launching projects to raise public awareness on the benefits of bird conservation and its potential for backing eco-tourism.

"Jordan has a great potential for specific eco-tourism projects given the nature of the diverse wildlife that abounds here," he said.

BirdLife International operates through a network of global partners and associates, including the Audubon Society, Britain's Royal Society for Protection of Birds and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

"We do not believe in the concept of the organisation dictating policies to the partners," he said. "In fact, we believe that our partners should lead the organisation and evolve specific regional strategies."

The mother group was founded in Cambridge, England, in 1922 to help conserve global nature using birds as an environmental barometer.

Jordanian-Iranian meeting to be held here in November

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian-Iranian ministerial committee will hold a meeting here in November under the joint chairmanship of the two countries' ministers of trade and industry to discuss cooperation in various fields.

The general manager of the Ministry of Industry and Trade's Economic Cooperation Department, Suhair Ammari, Tuesday said four agreements will be signed at the meeting covering air transportation, promoting and pro-

tecting investments, preventing dual taxation and establishing a joint council for Jordanian and Iranian businesspersons.

Ammari added that the meetings were originally scheduled to be held next month but were postponed at Iran's request to allow the meetings to coincide with the opening of an Iranian industrial product exhibition in Amman.

She added the two sides will also discuss joint ventures in the fields of potash and phosphates

and natural gas and oil prospecting in the Kingdom.

Ammari said Jordan will benefit from Iran's experience in dam and railway construction. The Iranian side voiced interest in building a water transport system from the Disi region to Amman, she added.

Jordan imported JD2.7 million of Iranian goods over the last six months, while exports to Iran totalled JD6.1 million, she said.

what's going on

FILMS

* "Jungle 2" at the American Center, Amman, on Thursday Aug. 27 at 5:00 p.m.

* Children's film "Watership Down" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

CONCERT

* Concert by the National Band of Circassian Folklore at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. (for the duration Aug. 27-30).

DIALOGUE

* Dialogue with Dr. Burhan Ghalyoun on "Arabs and the Challenges of the 21st Century" (in Arabic) at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 7:00 p.m.

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL

* "Summer 98" cultural activities at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, to last until Sept. 30, include:

EXHIBITIONS

* 50 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sabel Hani at the Main House.

* Works by Iraqi artist Samer Usama and Jordanian artist Said Haddadin at the Blue House.

* Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.

* Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'esh at the Museum.

MEDIA FORUM

* Interactive telephone linkup (in Arabic) on "Globalisation's Effects on Local and International Media" at the USIS auditorium, U.S. Embassy, Amman at 3:00 p.m. (Guests will be Washington-based Arab correspondent Mr. Hisham Melhem and Jordanian journalists Mr. Nidal Mansour and Ms. Ghadeer Taher).

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of wrought iron furniture by Jordanian artist Salim Al Bandak at Al Baider Hall, Kan Zaman village (Tel. 5862531), until Sept. 17.

* Summer display of products at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre/Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra (Tel. 569-9141/2), until Aug. 31.

Security Council takes no decision on probe

(Continued from page 1)

Unidentified U.S. government and intelligence officials cited for the daily some soil samples taken months ago outside the facility in Khartoum which contained traces of a rare precursor chemical for VX, which Iraq is extremely skilled in producing, the daily said.

"You don't obtain this chemical because you're making ball point pens or whatever," an administration official told the daily. "If you're making this, you're making VX."

The chemical, called ethylmethylphosphonoth-

ionate, or EMPTA, is described as an odourless, colourless liquid that can kill within minutes on contact with the skin or when inhaled. The sources also said that there was evidence senior Iraqi scientists had assisted the Sudanese in making the nerve agent at the bombed Al Shiffa pharmaceutical complex and at another plant a few kilometres away.

Khartoum is also seeking compensation from Washington for the attack which caused an estimated \$100 million worth of damage, and a condemnation by the council of the

U.S. action.

One diplomat noted that Khartoum's Islamist government did not have many friends among council members because of its "track record" on terrorism.

The Security Council imposed diplomatic sanctions against Khartoum in 1996 for failing to extradite suspects wanted in connection with the assassination attempt against Mubarak.

The council also later imposed an air embargo against Sudan, although a date for its entry into force was never fixed.



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Congo government indicates Kinshasa safe, diplomats on move

KINSHASA (AFP) — President Laurent Kabila's regime Tuesday said a key port was virtually held by pro-government troops, safeguarding Kinshasa, as diplomatic bids to solve the Congolese conflict went ahead.

Kabila himself was reported to have returned to Kinshasa Tuesday, while allied Angolan troops pursued an offensive against rebels southwest of the capital, though Luanda has openly called for a "political solution".

Didier Mumbengi, information minister in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), told AFP that the port of "Matadi is virtually under the control of our forces, but there are a few pockets of enemy resistance."

Matadi, on the Congo River upstream of its Atlantic estuary, is a main source of sea-borne supplies for Kinshasa. Early Tuesday, Kabila's motorcade was seen in the hitherto beleaguered capital, hit by power cuts and other shortages.

Meanwhile, Pretoria announced that South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo had Tuesday headed off with a peace team including his counterparts from Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia on a shuttle diplomacy mission.

South African President Nelson Mandela Sunday chaired a peace summit among almost all heads of state concerned. While views were divided, the parties present urged an immediate ceasefire and an end to troop movements.

Envoys were sent to Pretoria by Kabila, whose regime has blamed Rwanda and Uganda for "aggression" and being behind the uprising by mainly ethnic Tutsi Banyamulenge forces who had supported his own 1996-97 insurrection.

His aides at home later said that he had himself been commanding the war effort, travelling widely and was tired but recovering.

Soldiers from Angola and Zimbabwe intervened last week alongside DRC soldiers to help secure Matadi, 350 kilometres southwest of Kinshasa, as well as the highway to the capital, though Luanda has not formally admitted to having sent its troops.

Rebels are also active in the northeast of the vast DRC and claimed at the weekend to have seized Kisangani, a main city some 1,200 kilometres from Kinshasa.

However, Mumbengi stated that Kisangani was not entirely in the hands of the rebels, spearheaded by ethnic Tutsi Congolese who had initially helped Kabila seize power in May last year.

"Fighting is still going on in Kisangani," Mumbengi said Tuesday. "The Rwandan enemy controls part of the town and our forces are in the other," he added, without giving further details.

While the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan government had denied any part in the conflict, Uganda's Foreign Minister Eriya Kategaya Tuesday admitted that Kampala's troops had crossed the border.

However, he said that their aim was purely to prevent incursions from DRC by Ugandan rebels and dismissed as "laughable" claims that Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni nurtured dreams of a regional "Tutsi empire".

Earlier, Angolan intervention from the oil enclave of Cabinda was instrumental in taking Matadi and in the earlier recapture of Kitona, a military base the rebels had used as a headquarters, more than 500 kilometres southwest of Kinshasa.

Independent sources reported that Angolan troops also took the coastal oil city of Moanda and the

port of Banana, while the authorities said that the river port of Boma was also in pro-government hands.

However, Angola late Monday said it wanted a diplomatic solution, appearing to agree with Zimbabwean government remarks that their troops would not chase the rebels to their bases in eastern DRC, stating that their job had been done by securing Kinshasa. Nevertheless, Zimbabwean Defence Minister Mwenemahachi said Tuesday that the rebels had been warned they would meet a "very strong force" if they dared advance. "If they attempt, then bad luck to them," he said on television.

Kabila's government has defended the presence of Angolan and Zimbabwean military allies, while the United States has called for the withdrawal of all "foreign forces", warning of the risk of a regional conflagration.

Monday, the U.N. Security Council demanded an immediate ceasefire and negotiations, while former colonial power Belgium said it would help to back peace efforts arising from the Southern African Development Community summit.

The mission headed by Nzo is due to go to Addis Ababa to be joined by Organisation of African Unity Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim, then to Luanda and Kinshasa for talks with presidents Jose Eduardo dos Santos and Kabila.

'Angolan, Zimbabwean planes bomb Kisangani'

GOMA, Democratic Republic of Congo (AFP) — Angolan and Zimbabwean warplanes bombed the key rebel-held city of Kisangani in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo Tuesday morning, killing civilians, a senior rebel official told journalists.

"Angolan and Zimbabwean planes bombed civilians in Kisangani," the Congo's third biggest city, said Bizima Karaha in Goma, the rebels' headquarters on the DRC's eastern border with Rwanda.

"By bombing, they are killing civilians, but they don't have the ability to recapture Kisangani," said Karaha, an ethnic Tutsi who was President Laurent Kabila's foreign minister but switched to the rebel side.

He did not give a casualty toll.

Karaha also accused the Angolans and Zimbabweans of having bombed the small town of Kasangulu, a few kilometres south of Kisangani, Monday.

The rebels said they captured Kisangani Sunday, but DRC officials said Tuesday there were still pockets of resistance there.

'Colombian MPs, rebels hold secret talks'

GENEVA (R) — Colombian parliamentarians have held talks in Geneva with members of the leftist rebel National Liberation Army (ELN), a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Tuesday.

The day-long talks Monday, which were not previously announced, came amid efforts by President Andres Pastrana to try to end Colombia's three-decade-old guerrilla war, the longest running in Latin America.

Six parliamentarians and a three-member ELN delegation, led by Pablo Beltran, one of ELN's top two commanders, took part in the secret talks held at a hotel in the Geneva countryside under the auspices of the Swiss-based humanitarian agency.

An official from the Swiss Foreign Affairs Ministry was admitted as an observer by joint agreement between the parties.

"We facilitated the meeting between the parliamentarians and the ELN, which lasted late into the night," ICRC spokesman Ruben Ortega told Reuters. "We tried to be as

discreet as possible, but news leaked out in Bogotá." Asked whether any prisoner exchange was discussed — including the possible release of detained parliamentarians — Ortega replied: "We did not take part in the actual meeting. We do not have information on the contents of the talks."

"We are well positioned to organise such meetings, but we do not play a mediatory role in negotiations," he added.

Victor Riccardo, Pastrana's special envoy charged with trying to end Colombia's war, did not attend, nor did members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the country's oldest and largest rebel force, according to the ICRC spokesman.

"I am not aware of other meetings. None are scheduled," Ortega said.

Pastrana, who succeeded Ernesto Samper on Aug. 7, has vowed to make peace a top priority of his administration. He travelled deep into Colombia's jungle for daring face-to-face talks with Manuel Marulanda, veteran chief

of the FARC, in July. Last Friday, Pastrana gave a guarded response to a demand by Marulanda, Colombia's top Marxist rebel commander, for the speedy exchange of hundreds of prisoners.

Pastrana stressed that the government could only respond to the demand if the FARC provided it with a list of all its rebel detainees.

Government sources in Colombia estimate that any list of FARC prisoners would probably contain the names of at least 800 suspected rebels, including a dozen hardened FARC chieftains jailed on charges ranging from sedition to "terrorism against the state". In turn, the FARC is currently believed to hold nearly 250 security force members.

ICRC has a large humanitarian operation in Colombia, deploying some 50 expatriates and 200 local employees.

Its work includes visiting 4,000 people detained in prisons and serving as a conduit for messages between families and hostages held by paramilitary and rebel groups.



Malaysian opposition leader Lim Guan Eng (centre), bids farewell to family members before he is driven away in a police car in Kuala Lumpur. The Federal Court rejected Lim's appeal against his sentence for sedition and publishing false news. Lim, national chairman of the Democratic Action Party (DAP) Socialist Youth, will serve two 18-month jail sentences concurrently (Reuters photo)

Federal court upholds sentence for Malaysian opposition MP

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The Malaysian federal court Tuesday upheld a jail sentence on senior opposition MP Lim Guan Eng on two counts of publishing false news and sedition, in a move which rights groups including Amnesty International called a blow to free speech.

Guan Eng, deputy secretary-general of the main opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP), was ordered to serve 18 months on each of the two charges. The sentences will run concurrently so he will serve a total of 18 months.

"It is not surprising. It is a black day for human rights and freedom of expression in Malaysia," said Elizabeth Wong, coordinator of rights group Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Voice of the Malaysian People).

"Today the federal court has virtually removed every Malaysian's right to freedom of expression. We know that today's verdict will spur all Malaysians to work towards greater justice for all."

Amnesty International said it was shocked by the decision. It declared Guan Eng a prisoner of conscience and demanded his immediate release.

The federal court of appeal in April increased Lim's sentence to a total 36 months, saying it wanted to send a clear signal about attacks on the judiciary. But it allowed the two terms to run concurrently, effectively keeping

the sentence the same.

Under the constitution, an MP is disqualified if he is jailed for a year or more or fined 2,000 ringgit or more.

Guan Eng's father and DAP leader Lim Kit Siang told AFP the court's decision was a big blow to human rights in Malaysia.

"The Court of Appeal had enhanced the jail sentence. There was initial outrage. The hope that the federal court will do something has proved futile. I'm sure a large number of Malaysians are horrified by the outcome," he said.

The party was organising a candlelight vigil outside the courthouse Tuesday night. The Federal Court comprised Chief Justice Mohammed Ensoff Chin, Chief Judge of Malaya Wan Adnan Ismail and federal court judge Zakaria Yatim.

"We find that the Court of Appeal had considered thoroughly the principles of sentencing and had given the reasons for interfering with the sentence passed by the trial judge," Ensoff said.

"We find no good reason to intervene with the 18-month imprisonment imposed on each charge to run concurrently. We therefore dismiss the four appeals upon the conviction and sentence by the Court of Appeal."

Lim looked calm when the verdict was announced and hugged his family.

China sentences labour activist Li Bifeng to seven years in prison

BEIJING (AFP) — China has sentenced labour activist Li Bifeng to seven years' imprisonment for fraud, a Hong Kong-based rights group said Tuesday.

"According to our sources, a district court in the Sichuan city of Mianyang sentenced Li Bifeng to seven years' imprisonment for fraud, a charge often used in cases against dissidents," the Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China said in a statement.

The court had found Li guilty of embezzling 6,000 yuan (\$750). But the group said in its statement the activist had been framed.

It said the sentence was handed down because Li

penned an open letter saying that tens of thousands of people in Mianyang had staged protests over the failure of three state firms and the misappropriation of unemployment funds by corrupt cadres, the group said.

The authorities said only a few hundred people took part in demonstrations.

Li, 34, was detained by Mianyang police on March 8 and formally arrested and charged with fraud on April 6.

The Hong Kong group alleged Li had been framed by police to avoid international pressure which would result from jailing him on political charges.

"But it is obvious that he

NEWS IN BRIEF

Myanmar airliner crash-lands in Laos

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) — A Myanmar Airways domestic flight missing with 33 people aboard is believed to have crash-landed in a rice field in Laos, a government official said Tuesday. A family member of one of the crew members, insisting on anonymity, said she had been contacted by Transport Ministry officials Tuesday and told that all 29 passengers and four crew were fine. Other details were not immediately available. The Fokker Friendship aircraft was on a flight Monday from Yangon to the northern city of Tachilek when the crew contacted the Tachilek control tower and complained of poor weather. Shortly afterward, contact was lost and Myanmar authorities mounted a search and rescue operation. There were no foreigners on board. Two of the passengers were infants. Tachilek, 560 kilometres north of Yangon, straddles the border with Thailand in the remote, opium-rich Golden Triangle, where the borders of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos converge. The area is extremely rugged and isolated and communication is difficult.

Incendiary devices found near Irish border

DUBLIN (R) — Irish bomb disposal experts have removed 48 incendiary devices found by children in a town believed to be a base for the Real IRA, the dissident republican group behind a bloody attack in Northern Ireland this month, police said Tuesday. "Children found the devices in a hedge area on the outskirts of the town of Dundalk. The batteries were missing and they were not ready for use," a police spokeswoman said. She said it was too soon to say whether the devices had been dumped by members of the group which admitted responsibility for a car bomb that killed 28 people in the Northern Ireland town of Omagh 10 days ago. "The devices have been removed to Dublin for examination," she said. An army spokesman said the devices had been left recently as they were clean and dry, in storage condition and had probably been meant for collection by someone else or simply dumped. Police are watching every move by dissident republicans in the area who have broken away from the Irish Republican Army (IRA). They oppose the IRA's ceasefire and reject Northern Ireland's peace process because of its failure to achieve their goal of Irish unity. "It seems like a strange way to get rid of the things, but police are keeping so close to anyone up there who's even remotely involved (with the Real IRA) that maybe someone panicked," one security source said.

2 Japanese fighter planes feared to have crashed

TOKYO (AFP) — Two Japanese air force fighter planes were feared to have crashed into the sea Tuesday during a night training flight off a Pacific coast in northern Japan. The two F-1 planes, each with one pilot on board, disappeared from radar screens while in a formation with another on a low-altitude flight, the defence agency said. All the planes belonged to the air force base at Misawa in the north of Honshu Island. The training site was located some 120 kilometres southeast of Misawa.

China trains chicken army to attack locusts

BEIJING (R) — China has trained an army of 10,000 chickens to wage war on locusts in northwestern Xinjiang, Xinhua news agency reported Tuesday. The chickens, backed by tens of thousands of starlings, were called in after attacks by humans and aircraft failed to eradicate swarms of the hungry insects that had infested grasslands, housing complexes and offices, the agency said. "The chickens undergo a special 60-day training programme shortly after birth," the report said, but gave no details of the young birds' training regimen. Numerous nests were placed in the area to attract the starlings. Xinjiang's worst locust infestation in a decade has affected 174,500 hectares of grassland, about a fourth of grass-covered plains in the remote Muslim region, Xinhua said.

1 million visitors expected at Germany's largest wine festival

STUTTGART, Germany (AP) — "No beer allowed" is the motto at Germany's biggest wine festival, the Stuttgart Weindorf, which opens Wednesday. About 1 million wine-lovers from around the world are expected in Stuttgart, the capital of the southwestern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, during the 12-day festival. Some 250 types of wine will be available for sniffing and sipping, including the Swabian national beverage, the red Trollinger. Visitors can sit in the shade of 120 trellises set up around the town square, organisers said Tuesday. Every stand must offer at least one type of wine at 5.80 marks (\$3.25) a glass, which visitors are advised to bring with them. Because of past problems with loud music, bands will only be allowed to play without electric amplifiers. And organisers said serving beer is, of course, taboo during the event.

Nigeria to hold presidential vote Feb. 27, 1999

ABUJA (AP) — Nigeria will hold presidential elections on Feb. 27, 1999, in line with promises from the military government to hand over power to civilians next May, the electoral commission announced Tuesday. Elections for the national assembly in Africa's most populous country will be held one week earlier, on Feb. 20, the commission said in a statement. Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar, who came to power in early June after the sudden death of the former dictator, Gen. Sani Abacha, said last month that Nigeria would hold presidential elections in the first quarter of 1999, and turn power over to a civilian government in May.

Myanmar Airways
people aboard is a rice field in Laos. A family member, insisting on being contacted by Transport, said that all 29 passengers were dead. Other details were from Yangon to the crew contacted. The crew complained of poor search and rescue on board. Two of the 560 kilometres order with Thailand Triangle, where the and Laos converge, d isolated and com-

Border

spiral experts have found by children in the Real IRA, the d a bloody attack in police said Tuesday, a hedge area on the. The batteries were for use, a police was too soon to say. Police are watching can in the area who sh Republican Army ceasefire and reject s because of its fail- unity. "It seems like things, but police are p there who's real IRA that might y source said

Planes

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Wine festival

— "No beer allowed gest wine festival, the s Wednesday. About ound the world were al of the southwestern during the 12-day fest- will be available for the Swabian national Visitors can sit in the ound the town square. y stand must offer at marks (\$3.25 a glass, to bring with them, ith loud music, bands without electric amplif- ing beer is, of course

Presidential

hold presidential elec- ne with promises from and over power to civil- mission announced a national assembly in- nary will be held in a commission said in a ububakar, who came to, said last month that a elections in the first ver over to a civilian

World News

Jordan Times, Wednesday, August 26, 1998

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Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev (centre) holds a piece of landing capsule's parachute as he hugs cosmonaut Talgat Musabayev, while Nikolai Budarin (right), dressed in Kazakh national costume, looks on in Dzhezkazgan airport. Cosmonauts Musabayev, Budarin and former aide of Russian President Boris Yeltsin Yuri Baturin landed in a steppe near Dzhezkazgan Tuesday (Reuters photo)

Russia's orbiting bureaucrat returns to Earth

STEPPE NEAR DZHEKAZGAN, Kazakhstan (R) — Russia's first bureaucrat in space, Yuri Baturin, 49, returned to Earth safely Tuesday after a 12-day visit to the Mir space station, with two cosmonauts who had been in space for seven months, mission control said.

The unusual journey by President Boris Yeltsin's former top defence adviser was largely overshadowed by events at home, where the government devalued the rouble last week and was sacked by President Boris Yeltsin Sunday.

The return of Viktor Chernomyrdin as acting prime minister created a bizarre space-time warp for returning cosmonauts. Talgat Musabayev and flight engineer Nikolai Budarin, who went into orbit 207 days ago.

Both left before Yeltsin fired Chernomyrdin in March and missed the four-month term of Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko.

They returned to find their pay diminished after the de facto devaluation of the Russian currency last week.

It has never been stated clearly why Baturin was chosen to go into space, although space officials said he would make about 30 scientific experiments during his flight.

The space capsule with the cosmonauts landed at 9:24 a.m. Moscow time (05:23 GMT) in the Kazakh steppe, a mission control spokeswoman said by telephone from Korolyov, near Moscow.

Cosmonauts Talgat Musabayev, Nikolai Budarin and Yuri Baturin felt well after the landing.

The spokeswoman said the Soyuz TM-27 spacecraft undocked from Mir at 6:05 a.m. Moscow time (02:05 GMT).

"They landed 136 km from Dzhezkazgan, in the Kazakh steppe. Weather conditions were excellent during the landing," she said.

Rescue crews reached the capsule a few minutes after it unfurled its parachute and landed in a remote area of Kazakhstan. The recovery team set up a tent for medical inspections and the cosmonauts had a light meal.

They are scheduled to return to Moscow later in the day.

Cosmonauts Gennady Padalka and Sergei Avdeyev, who flew into space with Baturin 12 days ago, remain on board Mir. The space station is scheduled to be retired

next summer after a record 13-year mission orbiting Earth.

Mir experienced a near-fatal collision with a cargo resupply ship in June 1997 as the commander was attempting a manual docking. Subsequent crews have repaired most of the damage, although one of the station's seven capsules, Spektr, remains sealed off.

The new crew plans to enter the Spektr module next month to connect cables between the damaged module's working solar panels and the rest of the station.

Russian space officials say Mir is in good condition and have said a government decision to retire the station by next summer is based on financial rather than mechanical reasons.

Pakistan indicates support for nuclear test ban at U.S. talks

LONDON (AP) — U.S. and Pakistani officials held a fourth round of talks Tuesday on nuclear nonproliferation, and Islamabad indicated its support for a ban on nuclear testing and the transfer of nuclear technology.

Since India and Pakistan conducted underground nuclear tests in May, the United States has been trying to prevent a nuclear arms race in South Asia.

In a statement before the start of talks with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Shaukat Ahmed expressed hope for "positive and fruitful" discussions that would build on progress during previous meetings.

U.S. Embassy spokesman Rod Francis said Talbott would make no statement, except to confirm that "South Asia nuclear issues" were

being discussed.

The talks are being held at a secret location in London.

Ahmed said Pakistan supports nonproliferation but will not give up its newly acquired nuclear capability — "its credible deterrence capability."

The Americans have been pushing for Pakistan and India to sign the nuclear test ban treaty as a first step towards reducing tensions.

Ahmed noted that Pakistan had supported the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty at the United Nations.

"We have already declared a moratorium on testing subject to the maintenance of status quo in the region. We have also publicly stated that nuclear technology would not be transferred to any third party or entity. Thus, we have a consistently positive attitude to nonproliferation," he said.

But Pakistan has said previously it won't sign a test ban

treaty that would give an advantage to rival India.

During previous talks, Pakistan pressed for world involvement in settling the volatile Kashmir dispute that has been the cause of two wars between Pakistan and India. The two neighbours fought a third war over Bangladesh or what was then East Pakistan.

India has rejected international mediation in the Kashmir dispute. Both countries lay claim to a united Kashmir, divided between Pakistan and India by the departing British in 1947.

"The core issue is the Jammu and Kashmir dispute which deserves continued engagement of the international community," Ahmed reiterated in the statement.

He stressed that peace and economic security are Pakistan's primary concerns in the talks.

Pakistan's fragile economy, which depends more heavily than India's on international loans, has suffered from economic sanctions the United States imposed on both countries after their nuclear tests.

"Continuation of coercive sanctions will not help; these have always proved to be counterproductive," he said.

Ahmed said he would also use the meeting with Talbott to discuss last week's U.S. cruise missile strikes against alleged terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.

The United States attacked Afghanistan and a plant in Sudan in retaliation for the bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in which 257 people died and over 5,500 were injured.

Pakistan has condemned the U.S. attacks, but its criticism has been fairly muted.

N. Korea, miffed over U.N. human rights resolution, rethinks joining treaty

GENEVA (AFP) — North Korea, angered by a recent U.N. human rights resolution against it, said Tuesday it had changed its mind about considering rejoining a key international rights treaty.

North Korea last year withdrew from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in retaliation for a resolution tabled by a U.N. sub-commission stressing its concern over reports of human rights violations in the country.

A similar resolution against Pyongyang was adopted by the 24-member body last week in Geneva.

"We categorically reject the resolution aimed at isolating and destroying our country," said Kim Song Chol, counsel-

lor of North Korea's permanent mission in Geneva.

"The political game of the adoption... has totally extinguished any possible room for our reconsideration of the withdrawal from the ICCPR," he told journalists.

"Rather, this time we feel clearly that our withdrawal is absolutely right."

The sub-commission, an organ of the Human Rights Commission (HRC), requested last year that North Korea allow a visit of the HRC's working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

Kim said the North Korean delegation was told that if the visit was not granted, a resolution would be tabled.

"There is no independent country in the world that

would accept this kind of 'resolution' or 'demand for visit'," Kim said.

This year's resolution by the sub-commission on prevention of discrimination speaks of concern over "frequent reports of extrajudicial executions and disappearances within the country."

It states there are reports that thousands of political prisoners are currently being detained, "many of whom have suffered severe ill-treatment and have died of disease, starvation and exposure."

The resolution specifically urges the government to allow inquiries by independent national and international human rights groups and to allow the publication and distribution of all findings within

the country.

The measure calls on international human rights and humanitarian groups to devote fuller attention to the human rights situation in North Korea and to promote awareness of the food shortages and "other economic hardships endured by its citizens."

Kim blasted the sub-commission for passing resolutions against North Korea while failing to consult with its Geneva delegation, something he said was a normal procedure.

Asked what it would take for North Korea to rejoin the political and civil rights treaty, he replied: "It depends on the attitude of the commission members."

Rights group says 781 people killed, 163 missing in Indonesian province

JAKARTA (AFP) — At least 781 people were killed and 163 disappeared during a decade of military operations in the troubled province of Aceh, according to an Indonesian human rights report published here Tuesday.

Baharuddin Lopa, secretary general of the National Commission on Human Rights who led a three-day mission to Aceh last week, said the group counted 781 "violent" deaths during military operations between 1989 and 1998, the Kompas daily reported.

He said the team also recorded at least 163 disappearances, 368 cases of torture and 102 cases of rape in the province, where troops were sent to combat Islamic separatists.

The locations of nine mass graves had been identified, he said, adding the tally was provisional.

"This is just the results of observations by the commission team that visited Aceh, so it is not yet a formal figure for the National Commission on Human Rights," Lopa said.

"Whenever new data are found, it would be added."

The mission, which was in Aceh from Thursday to Sunday, covered two dis-

tricts and unearthed or pinpointed the remains of at least 22 people, most in a single mass grave in Lhokseumawe district.

Three forensic experts from the state hospital in Lhokseumawe, Pidie district in Aceh, were still working on the skeletons to determine whether the deaths had been due to bullets or blunt objects, the Suara Pembaruan evening daily said.

It also quoted North Aceh police Chief Lieutenant Colonel Iskandar Hasan as saying that from initial observations, the victims had died violently.

He cited the fact that some of the remains still had their hands bound by ropes and some still had blindfolds, the daily said.

On its first dig, the team unearthed two corpses at Pasilok, a beach north of Sigli in Pidie district.

Lopa has said many bodies were buried on the beach but were washed away by the sea.

One of the skulls in Pasilok had a hole believed made by a bullet.

The team found bones from two hands at a building used by the military to detain and torture people at another town in Pidie, and

dug up one of five graves of people shot by the military in a nearby town.

The team dug up one of eight graves at a site in Bukit Seuntang, in North Aceh district, finding the remains of at least 12 people.

Diggers found 24 thigh bones and five skulls, articles of clothing, cloth strips believed to have been used as blindfolds, and knotted rope used to bind hands. Bone fragments were still stuck to some of the ropes.

Lopa has said that, based on the findings in a single pit, the whole area there could yield the remains of more than 100 bodies.

On their way to Langsa, the team was stopped by villagers in Lhokseumawe, who showed them another mass grave site. They unearthed one skeleton before nightfall halted the dig.

Lopa and other team members have said that digs to discover more bodies would be left to the local population as long as they were witnessed by police who would keep any remains found.

Jakarta sent troops to Aceh in the early 1990s to counter an upsurge of

Islamic separatism. Local rights groups charge the military was responsible for hundreds of deaths and abductions.

Justice Minister Muladi said the government would compensate the families of victims. "I will convince President Habibie of the importance of compensating them," the state-run Antara news agency quoted him as saying.

Muladi said the compensation could come in the form of educational funds for the families.

Military chief General Wiranto early this month apologised for the atrocities and Thursday the first 250 of an estimated 1,000 combat troops withdrew from the region.

The military has said another 729 men would be pulled out of Aceh in the second phase of the withdrawal scheduled for August 31.

Although Indonesia is the world's largest Moslem nation, it is not an Islamic state. The Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh) movement has been fighting for an independent and Islamic state in Aceh since the 1970s and its activities surged in the late 1980s.

Hurricane Bonnie continues to move towards U.S.

MIAMI (R) — Hurricane Bonnie headed north towards North Carolina Tuesday as hurricane warnings were posted for a landfall Wednesday afternoon.

Bonnie was moving towards North Carolina's Outer Banks at 14 kph, and a National Hurricane Centre spokesman said the storm was expected to pick up forward speed during the day.

A hurricane warning was posted from Murrells Inlet, South Carolina north to the North Carolina-Virginia border, while a hurricane watch remained in effect from Savannah, Ga., to Murrells Inlet, about 80 km south of the North Carolina border.

Emergency officials intensified preparations and National Guard troops moved to staging areas in the Carolinas.

Surfers along the U.S. east coast took advantage of 3.2-metre swells heralding the advancing storm.

A massive storm more than 560 km across, Bonnie churned in place east of the central Bahamas before taking up a more determined

northwesterly track.

At 5 a.m. EDT (0900 GMT), the centre of the storm was about 800 km south-southeast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, near latitude 28.1° north and longitude 74.0° west, the National Hurricane Centre said.

Bonnie's top winds were 184 kph, making it capable of causing extensive damage.

About 1,100 National Guard troops moved to inland staging areas in South Carolina, where they will be deployed to the coast if Bonnie makes landfall, officials said.

Surfers rode hurricane swells along the east coast, but swimmers were warned to stay out of the water because of dangerous currents and surf as far north as Cape Hatteras.

"I've got my Jeep packed and I might just follow this thing right up the coast. Pretty cool, huh?" surfer Randy Paul of Fort Lauderdale said.

On North Carolina's Outer Banks, identified as the probable target, officials

planned to meet Tuesday to decide whether to tell tourists and locals to leave the islands.

In Carolina Beach, fishing charter captain Carl Snow planned to buy an extra anchor for his boat, the Fish Watcher, and planned to motor up Cape Fear river to an inland anchor when hurricane warning flags were raised.

"I still haven't recovered completely from Fran," he said, referring to the devastating September 1996 hurricane that made landfall at Cape Fear.

"Everybody got hit so hard by Fran that everybody is paranoid right now." At Cape Canaveral, Boeing Co. rescheduled for Wednesday the maiden flight of a powerful new Delta 3 rocket carrying a communications satellite.

The launch had been set for Monday but was delayed by the storm.

The fourth tropical storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, Danielle, formed in the Atlantic Ocean Monday, the National Hurricane Centre said.

Floods rage in northern India, relief stepped up

LUCKNOW, India (R) — Relief workers stepped up efforts Tuesday to help tens of thousands of people marooned by flooding in northern India as waters from monsoon-swollen rivers disrupted vital communication links.

Nareesh Dayal, a senior official of Uttar Pradesh state, said additional army personnel were being rushed to flooded eastern areas of the state and dozens of boats were being used to evacuate people to makeshift camps.

He said an estimated 370 people had been killed this month due to flooding in the state, most of them in the last 10 days.

A number of trains and road links, as well as power and telephone services in the eastern part of the state, were disrupted and more than 6,000 settlements affected.

Anurag Goel, principal secretary to the state's chief minister, told Reuters on Monday that up to 200,000 people in 600 villages were completely cut off by floodwaters.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee planned to make an aerial survey Wednesday of the areas hardest hit by the floods, which Dayal described as the

"worst ever".

The state government is seeking a grant of 10 billion rupees (\$235.3 million) to provide relief for the 4.2 million people affected by floods.

In the Himalayan north of the state, where 239 people were missing and presumed dead after massive landslides last week, the slow process of searching for survivors and bodies in Malapa was again hampered by rain.

By Monday, 53 bodies had been recovered from the site of a massive landslide that engulfed some 200 people, including 60 pilgrims on their way to the holy Hindu lake of Mansarovar in Tibet.

N.S. Negi, additional district magistrate of Pithoragarh, said 17 pilgrims from a group that had returned from Tibet on August 21 had been airlifted to safety.

"They had been camping there waiting for rescue," he said.

A government spokesman said in a statement that an INMARSAT satellite terminal had been installed at Bidukoni and was being used to coordinate relief measures in the area.

Dayal said water in an artificial lake which had formed due

to landslide debris blocking the Mandakini river was draining, easing fears of further flooding downstream.

He said 107 were feared dead in landslides which occurred more than two weeks ago and 10 bodies had been found last night in the Ukhimath, Rudrapur district.

Government figures released on Tuesday showed that since June 1 when the monsoon season started, 2,353 people have died in related calamities. Landslides and flooding from heavy rains have killed 688 in Uttar Pradesh alone.

In neighbouring West Bengal, swollen rivers at Malda in the eastern part of the state have killed eight people and affected 800,000 people, a district official said.

Bihar state officials said 155 people were either missing or dead and more than 6,000 villages had been affected by the floods, which occur on a similar scale every year in the eastern state.

All major rivers in the state originating from the Himalayas — including the Ganges, Gandak, Son, Bagmati and Koshi — were at dangerous levels.

Russian PM in favour of coalition government

MOSCOW (AFP) — Acting Russian Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin said Tuesday he was in favour of building a broad coalition government that included members of Russia's opposition parties, news agencies reported.

"It is necessary to form a government of accord," ITAR-TASS quoted Chernomyrdin as saying after meeting with a leader from the centrist Russia's Regions faction.

The term is a Russian formula long used by Communist Party boss Gennady Zyuganov, who wants the government to be representative of parliamentary factions and not just imposed by President Boris Yeltsin.

The Interfax news agency had reported Monday that Chernomyrdin promised State Duma speaker Gennady Seleznev that he would form a coalition government to help Russia through its economic crisis.

Yeltsin fired his liberal-dominated cabinet Sunday and gave Chernomyrdin, a former Soviet apparatchik who had served as premier for five years, broad powers to draft a new cabinet to his liking.

Chernomyrdin, who is holding a flurry of meetings with parliament leaders before his confirmation hearings open next week, said the economy is sure to improve soon.

"Far from everything has been lost," Chernomyrdin was quoted by Interfax as saying.

Viktor Ilyukhin, a top Communist lawmakers and chairman of parliament's security committee, said he expected left-leaning factions to win at least 10 ministerial posts in Chernomyrdin's government, Interfax reported.

Ilyukhin said he further expects a Communist to be named a deputy prime minister in charge of finance, economics, and industry.

Otherwise, Communists will "strongly oppose Chernomyrdin's government and not confirm him for the post of premier even under the threat of Duma dissolution," the news agency quoted Ilyukhin as saying.

Chernomyrdin has so far not named any perspective members of his new cabinet.

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Hope for Libyans

THE ACCEPTANCE of the U.S. and Britain to try the two Libyans suspected of the bombing of a Pan Am plane over Lockerbie in 1988 by a "Scottish court" assembled at the Hague is something of a "breakthrough" that was within reach many years ago. Tripoli has long offered to have its two nationals stand trial in a neutral country, an offer never accepted by London or Washington. Both countries insisted that the trial take place in Scotland where the ill-fated plane was downed.

During the impasse, Libya was subjected to grueling sanctions that nearly crippled its economy and severed its contacts with the outside world. Scottish law does not differ very much from the laws of any other democracy, and the sooner the trial is held the better it will be for all parties including the families of the victims as well as the Libyan. The Libyan people have endured untold hardships, both economic and political, for the continuing standoff between their government and the two Western powers.

We trust that this belated agreement will end the chapter of economic sanctions against Libya and its innocent people. The ultimate objective of any trial is to establish the guilt or innocence of the two Libyans in a court of law that is just and fair. It really does not matter much where the trial takes place as long as it is fair and objective.

Not long ago, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found that Libya is not legally bound to have its nationals stand trial in a foreign country. The ICJ finding implied imposing sanctions against a country for refusing to do something it is not legally bound to do is unjustified and illegal. At last we have a glimmer of hope that this episode of recrimination about the Lockerbie bombing is nearly over. Tripoli should put no obstacles in front of this breakthrough. At the same time, both London and Washington should end their arbitrary sanctions against Libya.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek took up the water issue again, questioning the passing on of further responsibility from the government to the judiciary. Sending the water report to the prosecutor general will only have two consequences, said Fanek. It will avoid the transparency the new government has been promising and will help the government bury the subject altogether. Fanek argued that there is nothing the judiciary can do on the subject. "Surely no one can accuse employees and officials in the Water Authority of intending to contaminate water supplies," the writer said. He asked, are the courts to prosecute a crime without being able to prove the motive behind it — a case of deliberate negligence. The problem is not a matter of justice or injustice, it is of a political nature, said Fanek. It is a result of the government's past inability to secure the building of the Al Wahid Dam on the Yarmouk River, a project planned in cooperation with Syria. Without the dam, Jordan can either give up its share of Yarmouk River water to the advantage of Israel, or store it in Lake Tiberias with all its consequences — i.e. polluted water that Zai Treatment Plant, as seen, is unable to cope with, he said. "Accosting engineers and directors of the Water Authority with court proceedings is not going to lead to anything," said the writer. "they should have been given a chance to answer to the investigating committee." Such proceedings will only spread fear among officials, they do not act as an incentive to shoulder responsibility.

U.S. attacks raises opposing analyses in American circles

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON — Regardless of how one views the American missile strikes against Sudan and Afghanistan last Thursday in retaliation for the August 7 bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, there remains a nagging feeling that this was a case of life imitating art imitating life.

Although a large majority of Americans supported President Clinton in his action, there remained good reason for some to suspect that there may have been a connection to the American leader's domestic problems emanating from his sordid affair with a former White House intern just as in the movie, "Wag the Dog" in which a president facing a scandal precipitates a war to divert public attention.

Similarly, questions were raised 25 years ago about the motive of President Richard Nixon when he placed U.S. nuclear forces on heightened alert in order to forestall, as it was said then, any Soviet intervention in the 1973 October War. Ironically, it became known much later, that it was the U.S. that had been engaged then in the largest resupply effort to the beleaguered Israeli forces in the Sinai. The Nixon alert came as his vice president, Spiro Agnew, tendered his resignation.

What may surprise people to the Middle East about the senseless American reaction is that there has hardly been a dissonant voice of any stature in the country to Clinton melodramatic action, a few days after he admitted that he was lying about his affair for the past seven months.

Opponents to the devastating American strikes barely approached the 16 per cent mark in most opinion polls, contributing to the view that Americans always feel good about what is known in the American vernacular here as "kicking ass."

But this feel-good foreign policy will not last if Clinton is weakened further by the independent prosecutor's

report when it is submitted to Congress in the next few weeks; or should there be a foreign policy challenge from an opponent, that may be more daring than the divided regimes in Khartoum and Kabul.

If to date the Clinton administration has been waffling on several international crises, particularly the Mideast peace process, its new stance against "international terrorism" is seen here as "a war without a foreseeable end." The debate pits those who feel that the threat is being overstated — it is reported that almost as many Americans die from lightning bolts a year as the total killed in terrorist attacks since 1989 — against others who want a more dihard approach, "a crusade" in the words of a former ambassador-at-large for counterterrorism during the Reagan regime.

"The strikes," L. Paul Bremer wrote in the Washington Post August 24, is "a welcome application of unilateral American force after years of dependence on desultory multilateralism."

America faces three harsh realities, he continued. "First, this is only the beginning of a long struggle against terrorists," he explained. "America will need a clear and sustained strategy backed by leaders of both parties to ensure continued public support."

He continued: "Second, there will be retaliation for our attacks... (and) finally, this struggle has no clear end point."

His view is that America will never "win" the war against terrorism. "Like crime, terror has been a brutal reality for all of history. But we can reduce its impact on our lives and interests."

Among the various steps he advocated was the frightening suggestion that the American president "should repeal the executive order (introduced during the Ford administration) banning the assassination of foreigners."

He argued it "makes no sense" under present U.S. policy that it is permissible to attack a factory in the middle

of a city or a terrorist camp inhabited by unarmed operatives, but not to target a man who is proud to have killed American civilians — a clear reference to the Saudi renegade Osama Ben Laden who is widely believed to have initiated the dastardly bombings in Africa last week.

On the sidelines in this "war of words" has been the advocates of the opposing parties in the decades-old Arab-Israeli conflict. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, an influential think-tank that usually bolls Israeli officials and opinion-makers, has circulated three in-house articles on the week's events, one a compilation of anti-American views in the Arab press.

An option proposed in another paper is an American military operation against Ben Laden which the author believes "would be facilitated by the fact that, with the exception of Pakistan, the states that border the Afghani Taliban are all opposed to the Taliban." These include Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and China.

On the other hand, the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), which "strongly and unequivocally" condemned the attacks on the U.S. embassies, said in "talking points" e-mailed to its supporters that "we feel it is crucial for the U.S. government to come forth with evidence linking Osama Ben Laden to the attacks and justifying a retaliatory strike of such magnitude."

Moreover, ADC decried the "double-standards of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East," pointing to its failure in taking any action against the Israeli government "which continues to defy international law, the international community, and U.S. policy itself" — a situation it felt will "reinforce anti-American sentiments in the Arab and Muslim worlds by projecting the United States as 'trigger-happy when Arab and Muslim lives are at stake.'"

The column Washington Watch by Dr. James Zogby does not appear today as the writer is on holiday.

Increasing production and employment opportunity in Jordan

By Ronald V. Canfield

IMPROVEMENT OF the economy in Jordan has received a great deal of attention by government and business leaders. These efforts are commendable and will certainly be expanded to insure a secure future for the citizens of this country. A primary focus is the improvement of manufacturing capability. This need was emphasised by the Amman Chamber of Industry which recently proposed solutions to curb unemployment as reported in Jordan Times August 23, 1998. The proposals included "Opening new markets and horizons for marketing and exports...". Also prominent among the proposed solutions are protectionist measures which emphasise domestic consumption of Jordanian products.

The history of mass production provides important lessons which cannot be ignored if the efforts of the government and business leaders are to be successful. The event which has had the greatest influence on production since the advent of the production line is recognition of the importance of quality. This recognition has led to management insights which cannot be ignored in today's manufacturing environment.

Although the principles of modern quality management which rely heavily on statistical process control (SPC) were developed previously, the first major application in industry had its beginning in the United States during World War II and was restricted to the war effort. After the war industrial production shifted to consumer goods. The innovators of quality management during the war found themselves unwelcomed in U.S. industry which felt secure with their old methods. Quality was seen as an individual worker responsibility and was best managed on the production floor. It was believed that quality could be achieved by inspection and rework or scrapping of inferior products.

These quality innovators were welcomed by top level management in Japan. At that time Japan was rebuilding after the war and was in serious economic difficulty. Within a few years Japanese goods began crowding out U.S. products both in the U.S. and in worldwide competition. Their goods were favoured because of the high quality of their products. The consumer is quick to learn that poor quality is a major cost which must be added to the purchase price. It has also been observed that quality management does not necessarily increase production costs. In most cases it reduces costs by effectively eliminating the need for rework and scrap.

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The reaction by U.S. industry was to lobby the government for protection and to appeal to patriotic sentiments in the country. This meant high tariffs and "Buy American" advertising. These measures are at best short-term with no lasting benefit. First,

they forced the public to use inferior products and second, they encouraged poor quality in domestic production (there was no incentive to change), thus aggravating rather than solving the problem. The end result was that domestic products could not compete in outside markets.

It took many years and painful admission by U.S. management that they were no longer supreme: Japan had something to teach them. The lessons to be learned are the following:

1. Quality is the most important characteristic of a product in today's competitive environment. Without it, no product is worth buying.
2. Protectionist measures only encourage poor quality in domestic production and insure that export markets are limited.
3. Quality is a top level management responsibility. Management at any lower level always makes quality a loser when matched up against management emphasis on quantity.
4. Quality management requires new methods based on proven scientific principles embodied in statistical process control. Japan has proven that the resources needed for a successful manufacturing base are a trainable work force and intelligent management. These are resources readily available in Jordan. The level and quality of education in Jordan is admired throughout the world.

It will be the responsibility of management to recognise the need to change and structure production using proven statistical methods. This change is necessary to meet the needs of the consumer worldwide.

The writer is professor emeritus of mathematics and statistics at Utah State University, Logan, Utah, U.S. and presently on the faculty in the Department of Statistics at Yarmouk University in Irbid. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Letters

Pro reservoirs

To the editor:

IN THE letter to the editor headlined "The reservoir solution," (Jordan Times Aug. 20-21) the writer reminded readers that during the administration of the late Wasfi Tal, it was mandatory that new buildings have a cistern for catching rainwater. Yet, as he pointed out, the regulation was never enforced. So much for foresight.

However, when we built our house in the Rabieh area in the mid-70s we included a 50 cubic metre cistern, which we use to store water from the mains. In theory, depending on how many are in the household at the time, we should have enough water for as long as a month. Yet, if there is no water coming from the mains, we too run out of water. Nevertheless, it is still an excellent move for people to seriously consider installing a reservoir or such a system in each occupied building.

If we cannot depend on the authorities for the supply of potable water, the individual citizen is responsible for his own survival, and should, from this clear lesson, take the obvious step towards his own preservation.

Alma Lou Annab
 Amman

Sanctions lesson tells on children of Saddam City

By Roula Khalaf

THE ZARKAA school for girls in Saddam City is only five years old, but walls are crumbling, and the desks have fallen apart.

Cardboard covers the broken glass in the windows, the library shelves are mostly bare and children sit on cracked floors to read.

The teachers, earning 3,800 dinars a month — just over \$2 — give lessons unenthusiastically in sweltering heat. Zarkaa — Arabic for "blue" — is colourless, except for the pictures of President Saddam Hussein and his sayings on the school's walls. "The pen and the rifle have the same end," reads one.

No wonder then, that about 100 of the school's 600 girls do not show up for class, and the teachers, whose salary barely covers their travel costs, have little appetite for teaching.

Saddam City is an overcrowded Baghdad neighbourhood where the countryside seems to have invaded the city. Sheep graze beside roads carrying donkeys and carts as well as cars.

After a decade of war and nearly eight years of United Nations

sanctions, Zarkaa school is no worse than schools across the country.

According to a 1995 survey by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), only 87 per cent of Iraqi children enrol in primary schools — down from 100 per cent before the Gulf war. And, of those who enrol, only 58 per cent finish primary school. Many are sent to work or beg on the streets. Teachers are also dropping out, especially in poor neighbourhoods where they cannot supplement their incomes with private lessons.

"The wastage in primary education is enormous," says Gloria Fernandez, education project officer for UNICEF in Baghdad. "Combine two wars and an embargo and one day you wake up and six years have gone by — that's a whole primary cycle — and then you realise that the education system has collapsed."

It might not be so dramatic if Iraq had been a poor country and had given little attention to education. But in the late 1970s, an oil-rich authoritarian system with aggressive ambitions had put emphasis on education, pushing

literacy rates by the end of the 1980s to as high as 95 per cent. Now, enrolment and drop-out rates put Iraq almost at the bottom of the scale in the region, with only Yemen lower.

The deterioration started with the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. Improvements slowed down, maintenance was halted, and teenagers in rural areas, for example, were called up by the army and never finished school. Girls, too, were being pulled out of school by the time they reached the age of 10.

Shortly after the 1990-1991 Gulf war, many schools, like Zarkaa, were built, in spite of the U.N. sanctions. But none has been maintained, as the education ministry's budget dried up. Because education depended totally on the state, which also imported everything from books to teachers' aids, the sector found few mechanisms to adapt to U.N. sanctions.

A totalitarian attitude towards education had also made it heavily geared towards high technology, with little attention to personal initiative or teaching methods. "The technology collapsed and

left nothing behind," says Ms. Fernandez.

Higher education is also suffering. A country which used to teach university students from all over the Arab World has been starved of books and research materials for eight years, in addition to the collapse of the infrastructure.

At the Mustansiria University, Qaus Jamil, a physics professor, says his greatest need is for a working photocopier as the university cannot obtain spare parts for its copiers. "You do not realise how important a photocopier machine is, it is essential, when books are lacking," he says.

Professors are stuck in the 1980s, having no contact with the outside world and know little of research and developments in overseas universities. The regime, afraid that Iraqis who leave would not return, prevents experts from travelling. Not that many can afford a trip, having to pay up to 400,000 dinars — a fortune by Iraqi standards — to cross the border.

The only pocket of private initiative in education has been the establishment of a dozen private

colleges, most of them set up under sanctions by unions of professional associations to cater to students whose grades do not allow them to enter state universities.

At the college for higher economic studies in Baghdad, the desks are new and more classrooms are being built. But only a fraction of Iraqis can afford to pay the 35,000 dinars a year tuition fees. And only business students have access to the ancient computers. "Could it be possible that I have heard about the Internet but I haven't ever seen it? Is it fair that I'm not sure what it is?" complains Mohammad Taqa, the college dean.

U.N. officials say there is some hope that the deterioration in education can be halted. Under the current phase of the oil-for-food deal under which Iraq is allowed to sell up to \$5.3 billion of oil every six months to buy humanitarian supplies, \$100 million has been allocated to education. UNICEF says it is a far cry from what is required to meet basic needs.

— Financial Times

'Indoor radon measurements ensure that Jordan is radon safe'

By Dr. Wajdi A. Kadir El Noor

Editor's note: The National Resources Authority forwarded the following article to the Jordan Times, with a view that it would be of benefit to the public.

RADON IS a radioactive gas from the radioactive series, uranium and thorium. Only radon-222 (from uranium-238 series) has well-known biological effects, however, it is not a toxic gas in the same manner as the ordinary non-radioactive toxic gases such as carbon-oxide gases.

The harmful effects of radon appear only after a long-term exposure to higher concentrations in almost closed spaces. Actually radon is considered a health hazard mainly in underground uranium mines and during milling operations of uranium ores. Lung cancer symptoms first appeared in uranium miners after 10-15 years exposure to higher doses of alpha radiation due to radon metallic decay products.

Scientists have only recently realised that radon gas may also be unsafe under certain conditions indoors. It is known that anomalous concentrations of indoor radon constitute a health risk in regions in the cold to temperate weather zones, like most of the European countries (including the Russian Federation) and North America. The reason why radon is more harmful in such countries is because houses are almost year-round are tightly closed to save on energy costs. Therefore radon and its decay products could accumulate to unhealthy levels.

Recent studies indicated that in countries in cold to temperate regions, the concentration of indoor radon is much higher than outdoors. Whereas, in hot tropical and sub-tropical regions there is no great difference in radon levels between indoors and outdoors; because the weather is warmer and so the houses are much more open to air circulation, and consequently lower radon levels. Likewise is the case in Jordan with its Mediterranean to arid climate where warm summers last more than seven months.

Rock formation units in Jordan consist of a wide-range of geological ages beginning from the oldest rocks of Precambrian to young volcanic rocks and recent sediments. The situation is similar in North African Arab countries, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Among these rock formations appears phosphate as a unique outstanding radioactive formation common in these countries. The radioactivity of phosphate has been well-known for a long-time. Therefore, most of these countries have investigated the radon potential by measuring in- and outdoor concentration levels, particularly, in the vicinity of phosphate occurrences.

A comparison between average indoor radon concentrations (given in radon volume activity unit, Bq/m³) measured in Jordan (conducted by Yarmouk University, Department of Physics, 1994) and those in neighbouring countries in the region is given below:

Jordan (25 Bq/m³), Egypt (11 Bq/m³), Saudi Arabia (65 Bq/m³), Syria (44 Bq/m³) and Israel (50 and 79 Bq/m³).

The comparison of these measurements reveals that:

• The average concentration value of Jordan is in compliance with the averages of the neighbouring countries, and

• compared with European standards, the values are far below the critical action level of 200 to 250 Bq/m³.

Considering a value of 79 Bq/m³ which is the Israeli average indoor level in the phosphate area, and knowing that phosphate on both sides of the Jordan Rift Valley have the same origin, then it is probable that radon levels in the cities of Karak, Ma'an, Madaba, Mafrak, Jerash, Ajloun and Amman, which are all located close to the phosphate occurrences, are far below the critical action level of 200 to 250 Bq/m³.

As a conclusion radon hazard, if any in Jordan is of no way different from that in the neighbouring countries, particularly, Israel.

Apart from the above-said discussion, there are several factors that could lower the level of radon concentration in dwellings in Jordan, even in radon-prone areas, these factors are the following:

• Dominance of natural ventilation during moderate cool winter days and both artificial and natural ventilation during summer days. For example studies showed that opening a door reduces radon level about 80 per cent, opening a window for five hours reduces radon level almost to zero.

• Low uranium and radium content in building materials used in Jordan i.e. Jordan usually does not use phosphate, and its by-products as aggregates in housing construction.

• Most of the buildings in Jordan were newly built and from an engineering point of view they are well-constructed, in particular, the sealed basement and foundations in turn prevent radon gas from penetrating the buildings.

Nevertheless, simple measures could efficiently reduce any abnormal radon levels. Such measures are: sealing the floors and walls, using fans to ventilate crawl spaces, covering walls with plastic materials and epoxy paints or even wallpaper.

The writer is a scientific advisor at the Natural Resources Authority.

Taiwan-China transport still a dream

By George Hsu Reuters

TAIPEI — On an early spring night in 1997 a ship from mainland China steamed into Taiwan's main southern port, carrying containers — and hopes of a new dawn in Taiwan Strait shipping.

More than a year later, that dawn has yet to break. The historic passage, the first since a 1949 civil war put the mainland in communist hands and made Taiwan the Republic of China's last redoubt, did not open the floodgates as many had hoped.

Flights between Taiwan and the mainland must go through Hong Kong or Macau.

Ships plying "direct" routes between Taiwan's Keelung and Kaohsiung ports and the Fujian province ports of Xiamen and Fuzhou cannot put their cargoes through customs on either side.

Taiwan's ban on direct links requires that they be transhipped to other destinations.

"Transportation between Taiwan and the mainland is a big market," said Shieh Ming-Hui, head of the Taiwan transportation ministry's Navigation and Aviation Department.

"The potential is unlimited."

Political divide

Taiwan's booming investment and trade with mainland China over the past decade have created huge demand for cross-strait transport, but political and military sensitivities still block all but the most modest links.

In the first quarter of 1998, Taiwan said "indirect" trade with the mainland was \$7.20 billion, or

about 10 per cent of all overseas trade. The mainland absorbs 42 per cent of Taiwan's total overseas investment, Taipei's economic ministry said.

New tensions that erupted in 1995 and deteriorated into a military crisis in 1996 hardly dented Taiwan investors' hunger for the mainland market.

Taiwan firms say without direct transport links, they are at a costly disadvantage to overseas rivals.

Costly detours

Anything that moves between Taiwan and China — be it raw materials, machine tools, finished goods, capital or people — must travel "indirectly" via Hong Kong or elsewhere.

Telephones can be dialled directly from either side, but calls are routed through third countries.

Mail is sent through third places. On Taiwan's front-line island defection outpost of Jinnmen, or Quemoy, just a few kilometres from China's Xiamen harbour, the desire for direct links is palpable.

Visible from Jinnmen, Xiamen teams with Taiwan-invested plants and property developments. But to reach them one must fly to Taipei and connect via Hong Kong or Macau.

At the Jinnmen Kaoliang distillery, director Chang Kin-Shyr grumbles that his mobile phone connects clearly to China, but to get there he must take a fishing boat shuttle, risking arrest, or fly via Hong Kong.

"Some links already exist. Yet for transport we are probably closer to London in terms of time of travel," Chang said.

Direct links across the strait

ended in 1949, when Nationalist "generalissimo" Chiang Kai-Shek fled with his army into exile on Taiwan.

Beijing sees Taiwan as China's last wayward territory — one that must be brought under its rule, by force if necessary.

Taipei espouses eventual union, but only under multi-party democracy. Until then, Taipei says Beijing should renounce its threat of violence and acknowledge the exiled republic's sovereignty.

Beijing flatly rejects such a scenario. Still, contacts have flowered.

Dire straits

Since China turned to market-building two decades ago, Taiwan has slowly warmed to its rival. Taipei allows a range of unofficial contacts and more than 30,000 Taiwan firms have poured some \$38 billion into the mainland.

Wary of overdependence on China's economy, Taiwan has deflected calls to end prohibitions on direct transport as well as some sensitive investments.

The sides seemed on the brink of political breakthrough in 1995, when high-level semi-official talks collapsed after Taiwan President Lee Teog-Hui angered Beijing by visiting New York.

Relations worsened when China's army harassed Taiwan with waves of war games near the island in the months before Taiwan's first popular presidential election in March 1996.

Beijing's firing of unarmed ballistic missiles into target areas just outside Taiwan's main ports was a chilling portent for any hopes of direct shipping links.

Despite the tensions Taiwan set up an "offshore" transshipment centre in 1997 in southern Kaohsiung port — a harbour where mainland ships can dock and transfer containers without officially "entering" Taiwan.

But arriving mainland goods cannot enter Taiwan customs and must be transhipped to third countries. Likewise, Taiwan cargoes at Kaohsiung cannot be put on ships crossing directly to the mainland.

Being Woos business

Beijing has tried to exploit the pressure exerted on Taipei by the private sector by withholding approvals for major firms seeking to operate even transshipment routes. Only a handful of smaller shippers have approvals.

Taiwan shipping heavyweights like Yangming Marine <2609.TW> have opened mainland offices.

"We need approvals, but are ready to carry cargoes between Taiwan and China," said Yangming spokesman Tsay Ming-Hsu.

Like their maritime counterparts, major airlines in Taiwan, the mainland and elsewhere are interested in tapping the demand for air links across the Taiwan strait.

Taiwan carriers China Airlines <2610.TW> and EVA Airways, a unit of shipping giant Evergreen, top the list and have long since taken the Republic of China flag off their aircraft.

Taiwan officials say full-scale sea links must come first.

"We should focus on sea transport first before tackling the more complicated issue of direct air links," Shieh said.

Serb refugees brave Croats, hardship to return home

By Louis-Marie Tattevin Agence France Presse

MARTIN BROD, Bosnia Hercegovina — The distance from Pero Rodic's farmhouse to his field is a two-minute walk — or it would be if it were not for the Croatian border which now runs right through the village of Martin Brod in northwestern Bosnia.

In 1995 when Croatia launched its successful offensive to reconquer territory occupied by Serb secessionists, the Croatian soldiers pursued the Serbs into Bosnian territory and the 400 Bosnian Serbs who lived in the village had to flee. Croatia unilaterally redrew the border after the offensive, with the result that half the village is now part of Croatia, separated from the other half by the River Una which is 50 metres wide.

Last November, Rodic and a handful of other Serbs secured permission from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees to return home to Martin Brod, an isolated village beside a rough mountain road.

They braved the hostility of local Croats to come back and despite there being no electricity, no telephone, no doctor, no school, no money and no livestock in Martin Brod, Rodic was adamant that he was still glad to be back.

"I am better off here, even if it is hard going, than in a refugee centre with 30 people per room," he said.

So far, 33 Serb families have opted to return to this region where Croats form the majority. Rodic has a sister on the Croatian side of the border. She was allowed to stay there only because she is married to a Croat. When she wants to talk to Pero she makes a hanging noise, he said. "Three knocks means she wants to see me at the bridge."

In fact, the bridge does not exist any longer. Only the broken arches are left, the superstructure was sabotaged long ago.

Since his return, from three years in exile, Rodic has been able only to wave to his sister across the river but no more. Sometimes, the Serb villagers who used to live in the 52 homes across the river, come to gather on the

Bosnian side of the bridge. But they have never been allowed over and are forced to return to Banja Luka, the capital of the Republika Srpska, to wait for the day when tension dies down and the borders are reopened.

Rodic said he had not wanted to wait any longer. "You could give me the nicest building in Banja Luka. But I wouldn't change it for my own house. Here in Martin Brod is my home."

With the Serbs who returned to Brod Martin, was a Croat, Emerik Plesnar who fled with the others when the Croatian soldiers came.

"I lived in this village where I came when I retired from the Yugoslav railways. When the Croatian soldiers came, we could see that they were of a mind to fire first and ask questions afterwards. And since it's not written on my face that I am a Croat, I fled with the rest of them. I was declared a refugee like them and I came back with them. The Bosnian Serb government pays me a pension of 50 marks (about \$30)," he grinned. "Everyone is my friend here. I am staying," he added.

Sit and watch — advertising in the most private of places

By Regina Doblies

BIELEFELD, Germany — One of Germany's youngest advertising agencies owes its existence to a half-hearted bet over a bottle of Martini.

Law student Kolja Wehle hit on the idea of placing ads in toilets after a visit to the United States two years ago.

"I was fascinated by the posters I saw in the men's rooms of the bars I went to," said the 26-year-old. "I thought to myself 'This has to work in Germany.'"

He mulled over his plan in detail on the plane taking him home, and later broached the idea to his friend and fellow-student, Harry Leyendecker.

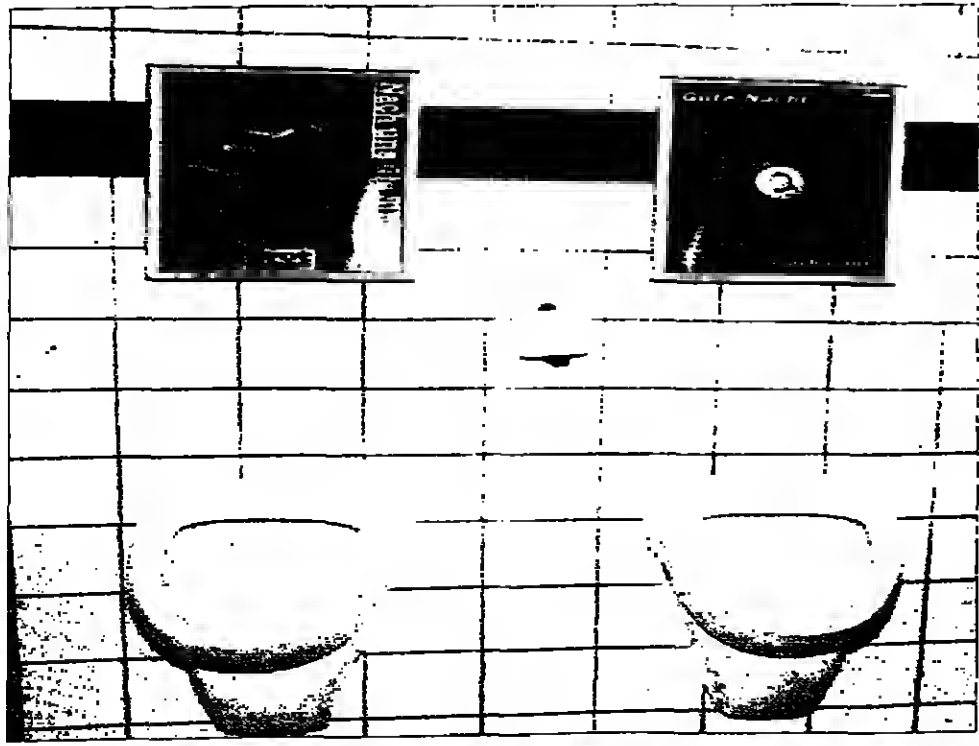
Leyendecker was unimpressed. "It won't work," he said. "It's far too outrageous for Germans. They're too conservative."

Nevertheless, he agreed to go along with the idea and over a drink the two friends made a bet, which Leyendecker lost.

The agency "sit+watch" now dominates the market in rest room advertising in Germany. Its motto: a pair of eyes — and lots of time.

Its products can be seen in railway stations, bars, discos and cinemas throughout the country.

At Munich station, one of the nation's biggest, the national railway Deutsche Bahn, has trust-



The average person spends 55 seconds on the toilet. Most are bored, say some German advertising agency, so they are sure to read a handy poster (DPA photo)

ed "sit+watch" to promote its train services in the privacy of the men's and women's rest rooms.

The tiled walls are also adorned with posters detailing the performances of the State Opera in Berlin, while a travel agent's posters decorate the doors of the toilet cubicles.

State health services, the charitable organisation Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World) and an organisation that looks after the women victims

of violent crime also use the services of the Bielefeld agency.

Wehle says the average person spends 55 seconds on the toilet. "Most are bored, but if their eye catches one of our posters, their interest is guaranteed," he says.

Unlike television advertising where the viewer can change channels, or magazine ads, where the reader only has to turn over the page, there's no way to escape advertising on the toilet.

One advantage of advertising in restrooms, Wehle says, is that it is relatively easy to pinpoint target groups.

"A cosmetic company would only want to advertise a new brand of lipstick in ladies' toilets, whereas a manufacturer of video games would opt for the men's rooms," he says.

It is also easy to target different age groups as well as social backgrounds, depending on where the ads are placed.

"Sit+watch" has so far rented space in 250 different establishments so they can promote their clients' products. Altogether they have more than 2,500 posters on display, nearly all of them framed and encased in Plexiglas.

The posters are affixed to the inside of cubicle doors or are positioned at eye-level above urinals.

Wehle says all kinds of firms have taken advantage of his agency's services, except for the food industry.

But what do the toilet users themselves think about the scheme? Quiet a lot, according to Leyendecker.

"A survey conducted for the agency found that only nine per cent of those confronted by the ads felt their privacy was being invaded. More than 70 per cent said they found the idea good."

The two partners are now looking to expand their business by using rest rooms for art displays and by launching a newsletter specialising on toilets.

Another possibility is using colour monitors to bring ads into toilet rooms. Wehle saw this for the first time in Hong Kong recently and is at present examining its potential for use in Germany.

— Deutsche Presse Agentur

Advertisement

ARAB BANK PLC GIVEN NEW RATING

(Continued from page 12)

Arab Bank can be described in at least two ways. The first way, the bank is clearly a survivor. The second way is that the bank's own name can be a misnomer, especially from risk profile perspective.

While the bank is headquartered in Amman, Jordan, the overall country risk profile resembles some of the best banks domiciled in both Western Europe and the United States. The bank brings with it, a long history and a philosophy that its customers are indeed "first and most important." It is this philosophy that has created the bank that exists today and that can lay claim to be a peer bank when compared to some of the best banks in the world. This philosophy has also moved Arab Bank into being one of the only true "flight to quality" banks in the Middle East.

Arab Bank is diversified over a broad geography where operations comprising more than 80% of consolidated activities are conducted outside of Jordan.

The unique capital structure enables the bank ratings to be considered independent of any sovereign rating for the country in which the Arab Bank is headquartered.

Further there are sufficient legal precedents and opinions which indicate that any potential extraterritorial seizure of Arab Bank external assets by local regulatory authorities is highly unlikely and not valid under most if not all legal jurisdictions. Accordingly, as the vast majority of Tier 1 capital, and assets are outside of Jordan thereby greatly diminishing the element of transfer risk and as a hard currency (U.S. dollar) is the functional currency for Arab Bank, Thomson BankWatch employs the global ratings scale for the Arab Bank rating.

Asset quality is extremely solid given the history of expertise cultivated and applied to lending. Additionally, a conservative level of loan

loss reserves is maintained to fully cover non-performing loans. The tenor of the loan portfolio is quite short with 80% scheduled to mature within one year as of YR97. Total loans for Arab Bank typically represent less than 50% of assets.

The stability of earnings is enhanced by the conservative asset/liability management as well as the lending strategy and geographic diversification. Also supporting the sound financial position is a healthy capital base with the BIS Tier 1 ratio exceeding 12% and shareholders' equity to assets of nearly 9%.

Arab Bank is well established and dynamic, as demonstrated in its sound performance and impressive perseverance. Management has planned for any potential disruption in the Arab region by building capital in its branches in some of the world's major financial centres. Even in the unlikely event of a regional difficulty affecting more than Jordan, Arab Bank has more than sufficient asset liquidity to repay all foreign currency obligations. As Arab Bank has several sizeable subsidiaries, affiliates, and an extensive network of international branches, the bulk of consolidated equity is housed outside of Jordan. Management has coordinated the broad geography of banking operations through the hubs in Amman, London and Geneva.

The underlying strategy has been a focus on serving Arab communities worldwide, particularly through trade finance both on and off of the balance sheet. Credit quality is solid, as are loan loss reserves and capital. Management prefers to maintain a high degree of liquidity mainly in conservative inter-bank placements and government securities. Consequently, returns have been modestly lower than those of diversified international banks. Management's successful and well developed strategy provides the foundation for the continued sound expansion of operations.

Israel's unemployment rate rises to 9.4 per cent

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's unemployment rate rose to a seasonally adjusted 9.4 per cent in the second quarter of 1998, the Central Bureau of Statistics has said citing preliminary data.

The figure marked the second big quarterly rise after the jobless rate dipped briefly in the final three months of 1997.

The unemployment rate was a revised 8.7 per cent in the first quarter and 7.6 per cent in the second-quarter of 1997, the bureau said.

Unemployment has been rising since the second-quarter of 1996, when the rate bottomed at 6.4 per cent, as Israel's economy has slowed. Gross domestic product is expected to grow by just 1.5 per cent this year, down from 2.2 per cent in 1997.

Growing joblessness has been exacerbated by structural changes in the economy that have left the thriving high technology sector short of skilled workers while much of the remaining economy experiences layoffs.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has promised to address the problem of growing unemployment by increasing the domestic deficit next year and by introducing retraining programmes and other hiring incentives.

However, private sector economists have said the programmes are unlikely to dent the unemployment rate. Bank Hapoalim, for instance, forecasts unemployment growing to 9.3 per cent on average next year.

The statistics bureau said the number of salaried employees, not counting foreign guest-workers and Palestini-

ans from the West Bank and Gaza, fell a seasonally adjusted 0.9 per cent in the second quarter to 2,044 million. It was the first decline since the fourth-quarter of 1996.

The bureau also said the civilian labour force participation rate fell to a seasonally adjusted 53.4 per cent from 53.7 per cent in the first quarter and 53.6 per cent a year earlier. It was the lowest rate in at least 36 months.

The unemployment rate among women generally rose at a faster pace than for men. It was a seasonally adjusted 10.0 per cent in the second quarter, compared with 9.1 per cent in the first quarter and 8.7 per cent a year earlier.

For men, the rate was 9.0 per cent in the second quarter, up from 8.4 per cent in the first. It was up especially sharply from 6.6 per cent in the year-earlier quarter.

Meanwhile, Israeli Finance Minister Yacov Neeman said Tuesday he expected to see renewed growth in foreign investment as investors sought alternatives to troubled emerging markets.

"I think in the near future we'll see a long flow of foreign investment into Israel, once it will be realised by the capital markets that Israel is a stable country," Neeman told Reuters TV.

"If there will be no investment in Russia, in Latin America and in South East Asia, the foreign capital market will have to look for alternatives and Israel can show a very good alternative for investment, especially in the high-tech sector," he said.

In the first half of the

year foreign investment plunged to \$618 million from a net \$2.11 billion in the second half of 1997 and \$1.47 billion in the year-earlier half.

But Neeman said there were already signs that foreign investment would pick up in the second half of the year and hinted that a major investment project would be announced in the near future.

Neeman said Israel had been spared the volatility of other emerging markets because it had acted early to stabilise the economy by bringing down inflation and cutting the current account deficit.

"When this government took office in the midst of 1996, (the) inflation rate for the first six months of the year (was) close to 15-16 per cent. We have reduced it to half in 1997 to 7.0 per cent and this year it will be less than four per cent," he added. "I think all bond holders can be assured that we will continue with this trend."

A weakening of the Israeli shekel has triggered a rise in the bond market's inflationary expectations — the difference in yields on inflation-linked and unlinked bonds. They are now at 4.8 per cent, up sharply from below three per cent in mid-July.

Neeman said the government would stand firm on its commitment to cut the budget next year in order to achieve a deficit of 2.0 per cent of gross domestic product.

He said there would be an increase in defence spending next year as a counter to the Iranian missile threat but that other ministries would have to make cuts totalling 2.2 billion shekels in what he termed "non-productive" areas.

Neeman reiterated the government's vow to boost infrastructure spending in the 1999 budget.

"We will see that infrastructure will be on the top (of the) list of our priorities in order to reduce the unemployment rate," he said.

Russian rouble nosedives to 7.86 to dollar

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's teetering rouble plummeted more than nine per cent against the dollar Tuesday, presenting new acting Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin with his first major headache as he set about tackling Russia's financial crisis.

The rouble staged its worst performance for almost four years, nosediving 9.2 per cent to 7.86 to the dollar from 7.14 Monday in a hectic interbank trading session twice suspended due to the currency's free-fall, the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange said.

With volumes back to meaningful levels after a week of market paralysis, traders said the slump was the first sign that the currency was floating towards a realistic level against the dollar, following the government's move to effectively devalue the currency last Monday.

The sharp depreciation came after Chernomyrdin, restored as prime minister Sunday, indicated a clear change of economic direction for Russia focussing more on industrial production and less on the tight monetary policy pursued by his predecessor Sergei Kiriyenko.

In an interview with Kommolskaya Pravda, Chernomyrdin said that paying off wage and pension backlogs and constructing a proper industrial policy would take precedence, "since purely monetary measures will not pull the country from its crisis."

Tuesday's sharp rouble devaluation, the currency's worst day since it lost 27 per cent in another "black Tuesday" on Oct. 11, 1994, presented the new acting premier with his first immediate problem since his reinstatement.

Chernomyrdin has pledged to shore up a banking system undermined by this year's financial meltdown and further shaken by last week's decision to unhook the rouble from its peg against the dollar and let it float.

Analysts agree that to do this, he will have to mount some sort of defence of his currency.

But the central bank, which has spent billions of dollars in recent weeks trying to insulate the rouble from massive capital flight, admitted last Friday that it is rapidly running out of funds to prop up its currency.

"We can't help being worried by the fact that banks are spurring the market virtually at the expense of central bank resources, instead of channelling the finances that they receive to meeting their obligations to clients," Interfax cited a central bank source as saying.

Traders said the sudden lurch had more to do with Russia's plans to restructure some \$40 billion worth of domestic debt frozen last week than with Chernomyrdin's first indications of his economic tack.

The head of the inter-bank exchange told Russian television that the fall was due to "a build-up of negative expectations."

"I don't think today's fall in the rate has a political meaning," said Alexei Mamontov, "The market needs news on the debt restructuring."

But some analysts said the acting premier's plans would inevitably fuel inflation and could jeopardise IMF loans to the Russian government, ultimately heaping further pressure on the rouble.

"The dollar will most likely get stronger and at a fairly quick rate," a liberal economic observer Mikhail Berger told Moscow Echo radio.

Traders said the debt recapitalisation, keenly awaited by investors, would necessarily involve some portion of the frozen treasury bills and bonds being redeemed for cash, which would hit the market with a further supply of rubles that market players would seek to dollarise.

"We believe the rouble fall is linked with news of debt restructuring," said Sergei Pchelintsev, a foreign exchange dealer with ING Barings in Moscow.

"The rumours are that some of the short-term debt, perhaps as much as 25 per cent, will be

redeemed for cash, and investors will immediately seek to turn these roubles into dollars," he said. "This is where the pressure is coming from."

Other traders noted the rouble slump came amid relatively heavy

volume of some \$430 million, which indicated that the market was slowly coming to life after last week's deathly silence, and that the rouble was thus only now finding an equilibrium.

"The fall was expected as today was the first really significant day of trading in terms of volume, so we have ended up with a much more realistic rate," said Mikhail Koltsov, a trader with the MFK Renaissance financial group.

REUTERS • REUTERS •

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7888	0.6103	1.6033	144.50	1.5499	1776.50	2.0287	6.5330
DE Mark	0.5588	1.0000	0.3368	0.8364	80.45	0.8811	996.17	1.1274	3.3814
GB Sterling	1.6388	2.9480	1.0000	2.4612	163.37	1.7537	2007.20	2.3623	7.4784
CH Franc	0.6103	1.0948	0.4058	1.0000	93.75	1.0302	1179.56	134.81	4.0084
JP Yen	0.0069	1.2430	0.4215	1.0386	1.0000	1.0714	122.88	140.17	4.1678
CA Dollar	0.6462	1.2915	0.4225	1.0666	1.07	1.0000	1270.80	145.91	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0134	0.3439	0.8847	1228.20	0.8734	1.0000	11.43	3.3982
NL Guilder	0.4829	0.8887	0.3008	0.8008	74.10	0.7841	874.64	1.0000	2.9727
FR Franc	0.1658	0.2982	0.1011	0.2412	23.95	0.2570	33.63	33.6300	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7517	0.3770	3.6300	0.3072	3.6728	1619.00	3.4275
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2915	0.5317	5.1326	0.4333	6.1803	2142.45	4.6343
Saudi Riyal	0.2655	0.1800	1.0000	0.1006	0.97	0.0819	0.98	404.88	0.9136
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.9515	1.0000	9.65	0.8149	9.74	4029.18	9.0915
Qatar Dinar	0.2748	0.1948	1.0310	1.0000	1.0310	0.0844	1.01	417.42	0.9419
Kuwait Dinar	3.2652	2.3079	12.2128	1.2272	11.85	1.1185	11.85	4944.65	0.9419
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0215	1.0126	0.9908	0.0836	1.01	413.58	0.9332
Lebanese 1000	0.65	0.4688	2.4698	0.2482	2.3957	0.2022	2.4179	3390.42	2.2864
Egyptian	0.2510	0.2069	1.0948	0.1100	1.0817	0.0896	1.0718	443.19	1.0000

Energy		Mid-East Currencies				
Oil	Last	SA Riyal	AE Dirham	KW Dinar	BH Dinar	CY Pound
Brent	0.00	0.2555	0.4796	0.16278	0.40095	38.5698
WTI	13.84	0.2723	0.48993	0.16616	0.40968	39.398
Bonny	0.00	3.2552	5.9823	1.98649	4.89716	471.032
Dubai	12.41	0.3770	4.7327	1.51885	3.99042	383.877
UL Gas	138.00	1.8883	3.3981	1.1624	2.8399	273.178

Metal Prices		Libor Fixing				
Metal	Bid	Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-1-
Gold (oz's)	282.3	Month	5.6445	5.6875	5.6875	5.6875
Silver (oz's)	6.02	Month	7.7500	7.7500	7.7500	7.6250
Platinum (oz's)	363.5	Month	0.5625	0.5637	0.5646	0.5645
AL (3 Months)	1344	Month	3.4375	3.5000	3.5820	3.6800
CU (3 Months)	1940	Month	3.5000	1.7930	1.8750	2.0000
Zinc (3 Months)	1040	Month	1.7422	3.6391	3.8016	3.6992
Lead (3 Months)	535	Month	5.9320	4.9030	4.5700	1.0000
Ni (3 Months)	4150	Month				

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	8883.67	97.06	1.13	8895.56	8868.41
New York	S&P 500	1104.43	15.29	1.5	1106.59	1098.14
London	FT-SE 100	5833.9	90.2	1.44	5855.6	5851.7
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	15072.93	84.67	0.56	15072.2	14988.4
Paris	CA 40	4017.73	80.3	2.04	4033.18	3976.56
Frankfurt	DAX	6371.93	137.05	2.62	6399.89	6273.81

Energy		JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Last	Currency	Buy	Sell
Coffee (c/lbs)	114	US Dollar	0.708	0.710
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1895	GB Sterling	1.1595	1.1883
Sugar (\$/ton)	246.8	DE Mark	0.3941	0.3961
Wheat (\$/ton)	0	CH Franc	0.4708	0.4733
Soya (c/lbs)	24.15	FR Franc	0.1176	0.1182
Tea (c/lbs)	125	JP Yen	0.4909	0.4934
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	NL Guilder	0.3495	0.3512
Rice (\$/ton)	415	IT Lira	0.3395	0.4015

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- E. O'Brien film
- African flies
- Quantity of gum
- Central starter?
- Guest
- Lunched
- Coat's coat
- Nautical distance
- de deux
- Priest's vestment
- Passover repasts
- Under the weather
- Timekeepers' cohorts
- Jobs
- Follow as a consequence
- Punctual
- Second spouses, to one's children
- Took a chair
- Soaks
- Org. of links
- professionals
- Snack food
- Part of New York City
- Reader's card
- Balsam-like flower
- Political runner
- Composer
- Satie
- Composite picture
- SE Asian war, casually
- Gaming cube
- Italian inventor
- PC maker
- Hosp.
- employees
- Anonymous
- Alternative to lager
- Artist's rep.
- Consider
- Actor Beatty

DOWN

- Maligns
- Luxurious
- Military landing field
- Packing material
- Look of contempt
- Met out of the way
- Cook's clock
- Mixes up
- Cave-dwelling fish
- Get the picture
- Elks
- Chilean desert
- Tracy-Hepburn film
- Drunkard
- Ones
- Bug killer
- Eight: ft.
- Molecule component
- Furrow
- Period
- Singer
- "King" Cole
- Cupped fish
- Theseus
- Small cooker
- Bohemian to the max
- Teheran tongue
- Fit to drink
- Like pipes and flowers
- Courtsip display area
- Foot problems
- Songwriters
- Ruth's mother-in-law
- Consumes
- supper
- Lion's hair
- Wet soil

Peanuts

RATS! MY TEAM LOST AGAIN...

THAT WASN'T A REAL GAME. THAT WAS A MOVIE...

HOW COULD IT BE A MOVIE? THOSE WERE REAL PEOPLE...

WHEN IT WAS OVER, DID IT SAY "THE END"?

WE'RE STILL HERE, AREN'T WE?

Andy Capp

TCH, TCH, THE SLEEPY YOU MISS, PET, WAITING UP FOR ME...

I SUGGEST YOU TAKE THE MORNING OFF WORK AND HAVE A LIE-IN THANKS.

WE'LL FORGIVE A LOT IF THEY COME UP WITH AT LEAST ONE SENSIBLE REMARK IN THE COURSE OF TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

Mutt'n'Jeff

HELLO, MRS. GUFFY? I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR A LONG TIME! HOW ARE YOUR CHILDREN?

OH, THEY'RE MARRIED NOW!

MY DAUGHTER, DOLLY, MARRIED A WONDERFUL MAN! HE'S A HUSBAND! HE BREAKFAST IN BED EVERY DAY! HE DOES THE WASH AND DRIES THE FLOORS FOR HER! SHE DON'T HAVE TO LIFT HER LIFT! FORTUNATELY A REGULAR LADY!

BUT MY SON JOE! HE'S MARRIED A REAL NO-ACCOUNT WOMAN! HE HAD TO BRING BREAKFAST IN BED EVERY DAY! SHE DON'T DO ANYTHING AROUND THE HOUSE! ANYSON, JOE, DOES EVERYTHING! HIS WIFE A NO-GOOD!

WELL... THAT'S MOTHERS FOR YA!

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

"If I insulate my body with fat, we don't have to spend all that money to insulate the house!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ONIGG

RIBAN

TIVNAY

WALLOH

WHAT THE ABSTRACT ARTIST'S VIEW OF COLOR WAS CONSIDERED.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: FLOOR MAUVE EMPLOY KOWTOW
Answer: What the pianist got with his new apartment — A "FLAT" KEY

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

State revenues drop by three per cent during first six months of this year

**** A FALL** in taxes and other earnings has caused a 3.8 per cent drop in the revenues of the state treasury during the first half of this year compared to the same period in 1997. According to the Ministry of Finance, the gross local revenue declined from JD704.2 million during the first half of 1997 to JD677.4 million during the first six months of this year.

This sharp fall resulted from tax revenues dropping from JD428.6 million to JD413.5 million and other earnings going down from JD275.6 million and JD263.9 million. At the same time, the ministry said, the recurrent spending increased by 9.5 per cent rising from JD726.1 million to JD795.2 million. Investment (capital) spending also fell by 2.7 per cent from JD141.4 million to JD137.7 million.

Despite the rise in foreign assistance from JD60 million to JD73.6 million during the first six months of 1998, an increase of 21.1 per cent, the budget deficit rose to JD194 million after being JD91 million in the first six months of 1997. If foreign aid is excluded, the deficit would reach JD267.6 million (JD173.3 million during the January-June period of last year).

The official figures from the Ministry of Finance also show that the proceeds from the sales tax went down by 11.7 per cent to JD154 million after reaching JD174.4 million during the first six months of last year. This data confirms the credibility of the private sector warnings that

any higher taxes would deepen the economic recession. However, the revenue from customs was higher as it amounted to JD134.6 million during the first half of this year compared to JD121.4 million during the same period of last year.

The ministry revealed that the value of food subsidies totalled JD20.5 million, 17.7 per cent less than the JD24.9 million recorded during the first half of 1997. The value of subsidies provided during the whole of 1997 amounted to JD51 million.

Observers fear that the budget deficit would swell by the end of this year as a result of the economic slowdown and the recession that is plaguing some sectors, especially the construction sector which is considered basic and fundamental in moving the national economy.

The government is seeking to stimulate economic activity and meet the demands of the private sector to exempt industrial inputs from customs in order to lift the competitiveness of industrial products. But the budget deficit pressure is still putting the government in a difficult position on how to compensate the decline in customs revenue, estimated at JD80 million, if the inputs are given the exemptions requested (Al Arab Al Yawm).

Business battens down for millennium bug

SINGAPORE (R) — Asia will be the first and possibly least prepared region of the world to face the dreaded millennium bug and its associated computer chaos.

It has been an uphill battle for Asian governments and companies to beat the clock and fix the software glitch in which many computers are expected to misread the year 2000 as 1900.

In the waning years of the 20th century, the region has been throbbled by a sweeping recession that has made funds scarce.

"The financial crisis has diverted away attention from Y2K (Year 2000)," said Bibiana Choo, a first vice president in Merrill Lynch Singapore's South Asia Corporate Research group.

She said countries that may survive the bug threat were Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Taiwan and the Philippines.

The ones at risk? Indonesia and China.

In Indonesia, whose economy is in shambles, companies had slashed their information technology spending by 80 per cent, said Chris Morris, research director at Gartner Group's Dataquest.

"Y2K is not a big target for them right now," he said.

Problem costs time, money solving the millennium bug problem is time and money intensive. The Gartner Group estimates it will cost between \$300 billion and \$600 billion worldwide.

Without the remedy, computer parts running everything from household products to complex aviation systems would be unable to recognise the year 2000 and may read it as 1900, resulting in a myriad of problems including breakdowns, the spewing out of wrong data or a total shutdown.

The more pessimistic forecasters say the ensuing computer malfunctions could send the world into a severe recession.

Edward Yardeni, chief economist at Deutsche Bank Securities, said the probability of a recession due to Y2K had increased to 70 per cent from his previous forecast of 60 per cent.

Millennium dawn brings questions so what will happen when the millennium dawns on Jan. 1? The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency said in May it had overall concerns about "the potential disruption of power grids, telecommunications and banking services."

In Asia, analysts said banks seem to have girded up on any and millennium bug measures, and most major airlines were also prepared. But there were problem spots among manufacturers in China and South Korea and in electric utilities in Pakistan and Malaysia, analysts said.

On Asia's phone lines, "Domestic interconnect in most Asian markets is

already a significant problem, even without the threat of a Y2K data collection breakdown," a Merrill global study on Y2K released this month said.

"Universally, the banks seem to be at the forefront of fixing Y2K," said Dataquest's Morris.

"Likewise the big retailers. Where the biggest damage potential seems to lie is in government departments. They are chronically underfunded and understaffed," Merrill found that most Asian companies were in the early stages of fixing the bug. In a survey of 460 Asia companies, 72 per cent expect to be Y2K compliant.

India and the Philippines top the list, with 97 per cent and 86 per cent, respectively, but only half or less of companies in Indonesia and China expect to have resolved the problem.

"My personal view is there may be some hiccups here and there," said Sor Lin Chong, director of services and projects at Singapore's National Computer Board (NCB), which is coordinating Y2K awareness programmes.

Companies and governments in the region have been making more effort to fix the bug in the past year. But industry experts worry about smaller companies that are outside the scrutiny of regulators.

"Many governments are not doing much to help out small companies," said Howard Hsu, a senior services analyst at International Data Corp (IDC).

But that said, Hsu believes Asia is more aware than before about the Y2K problem and said that the number of companies starting remedial programmes had jumped.

In a survey completed this April in China, India, Korea and Malaysia, IDC saw encouraging results on the state of preparedness.

A cross-section of 300 companies interviewed in China found half unprepared for the problem. But that was down from 69 per cent in 1997 that had not started any Y2K programmes, Hsu said.

Other signs of improvement were in Malaysia, where the proportion of companies that said Y2K programmes were under way had nearly doubled to 55 per cent from 28 per cent, IDC found.

Singapore readier than most Singapore, which has

received high marks from industry experts, is redoubling efforts to reach small and medium-sized companies.

A survey by the Singapore Federation of the Computer Industry in June of 350 Singapore companies found 99 per cent of respondents saying they expected their Y2K problems to be fixed by 1999.

The National Computer Board is focusing on smaller companies, noting that this segment often lacks the resources and information enjoyed by multinationals.

Singapore is providing grants to defray the cost of Y2K consultancy fees to small and medium-sized firms.

"It's the smaller companies that may need more help," Choo said. The NCB has been spreading the word for the past two years through seminars it sponsors and by providing information through a web site <http://www.ncb.gov.sg/ncb/yr2000>.

Japan small firms seen vulnerable Merrill said it expected large Japanese companies to be ready to face the bug.

"...the weak spot is the small business sector," the broker-

age firm said. A survey conducted in September 1997 by the Japan Information Service Industry Association said that 33 per cent of firms with capital below 100 million yen had taken or were in the process of taking measures to deal with the Y2K issue.

Small and medium-sized companies in Hong Kong are confident of being able to beat the bug — more than 200,000 of them make minimal use of computers.

"There is nothing alarming about the bug and Hong Kong can get over it," said Anthony Au, a member of Hong Kong's SME (small- and medium-sized enterprises).

The top 50 companies in Australia plan to spend more than A\$2 billion resolving millennium bug problems.

"Economic growth as we go into 1999 and 2000 will have to be revised down as people begin to understand what the reality of the effect of the millennium bug on our economy will be," said Maurice Newman, chairman of the government-funded Year 2000 committee.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 1998

By C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

Aug. 21 to April 19 You're getting a lot of love. You're looking good. Other people are looking at you. You might be getting a lot of attention. If you were going to get married, this would be a good day to begin.

April 20 to May 20 You're being pushed to do things. It's as if there's something you're trying to do and you're trying to do it the hard way. If you get other people involved this will be a lot easier. It looks like they need your expertise.

May 21 to June 21 An early dinner date will be the best because you and your sweetheart will be in the mood and that's when you'll have the most fun. You might remember something later that you did on that date.

June 22 to July 21 The moon's going into Cancer. This brings out your cuddly, romantic side and is attractive to a person you find attractive. This is an interesting evening. Schedule a date with a person you find fascinating. If the other person can't wait, such short notice, tomorrow night's good, but it's not even better.

July 22 to August 21 There's either a problem with somebody you live with or you're having a problem with the house itself. There's a tough decision and you'll have to live with it for quite some time. You're involved, be especially careful. This is a time when you need to get things done quickly, so don't get pushed into anything.

August 22 to September 21 The moon's going into Libra. This helps you concentrate and makes you more focused. There are several things that would be good for you and one of them is how to fix something. Encourage a partner to develop new skills. This is a time when you need to get things done quickly, so don't get pushed into anything.

September 22 to October 21 A friend could be a good idea today, so let people know what you're up to. Don't expect smooth sailing. This is a time when you need to get things done quickly, so don't get pushed into anything.

October 22 to November 21 When conditions are perfect, people tend to follow strong leadership. You can think of lots of ways for people to actually serving the greater good. This is a time when you need to get things done quickly, so don't get pushed into anything.

November 22 to December 21 Be careful. The moon has gone into Sagittarius. The sign of truth. This is a time when you need to get things done quickly, so don't get pushed into anything.

December 22 to January 20 You'll be busy as the day goes on. You'll be busy during the day, but if you can't get things done, you should work out. Schedule a date with a person you find fascinating. If the other person can't wait, such short notice, tomorrow night's good, but it's not even better.

January 21 to February 19 The sun is in Aquarius. This brings out your individuality and is attractive to a person you find attractive. This is an interesting evening. Schedule a date with a person you find fascinating. If the other person can't wait, such short notice, tomorrow night's good, but it's not even better.

February 20 to March 20 You may get an idea. This is a time when you need to get things done quickly, so don't get pushed into anything.

March 21 to April 19 The sun is in Aries. This brings out your courage and is attractive to a person you find attractive. This is an interesting evening. Schedule a date with a person you find fascinating. If the other person can't wait, such short notice, tomorrow night's good, but it's not even better.

April 20 to May 20 You may get an idea. This is a time when you need to get things done quickly, so don't get pushed into anything.

May 21 to June 21 The sun is in Gemini. This brings out your communication skills and is attractive to a person you find attractive. This is an interesting evening. Schedule a date with a person you find fascinating. If the other person can't wait, such short notice, tomorrow night's good, but it's not even better.

June 22 to July 21 The sun is in Cancer. This brings out your emotions and is attractive to a person you find attractive. This is an interesting evening. Schedule a date with a person you find fascinating. If the other person can't wait, such short notice, tomorrow night's good, but it's not even better.

July 22 to August 21 The sun is in Leo. This brings out your confidence and is attractive to a person you find attractive. This is an interesting evening. Schedule a date with a person you find fascinating. If the other person can't wait, such short notice, tomorrow night's good, but it's not even better.

Power station likely to get World Bank financial support

AMMAN (Petra) — The World Bank is considering providing guarantees for commercial loans to Jordan worth \$50 million to help establish a power station with a capacity of 300 million watts, according to a statement issued by the World Bank.

The power station which will be operated by diesel or natural gas and located near Amman will cost \$200-250 million and the bank will secure an amount of \$138 million from international financing corporations through import investment loans.

The statement said that the project will be implemented by the private sector between the years 1999-2002 and it will enable Jordan meet the high demand on power between the years 2003-2005.

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Sports

Muster moves on easily

BROOKLINE (AP) — Thomas Muster, a top 10 player the last three years before falling to his current No. 24 ranking, dominated Marcelo Filippini of Uruguay 6-0, 6-3 Monday night in the first round of the MFS Pro Tennis Championships at Longwood Cricket Club.

The fifth-seeded left-hander from Austria took control in the 55-minute match with top-spin forehands. Muster led 3-0 in the second set before Filippini was able to salvage a few games.

"They're never easy," Muster said, "but I moved very well today."

"He overpowered me and I never had a chance to play my game," Filippini said.

Muster won this event 10 years ago when it was played on clay, his favorite surface. It's now played on hardcourt.

Earlier Monday, Gianluca Pozzi, at 33 the oldest player on the ATP Tour, upset sixth-seeded Fabrice Santoro of France, 6-2, 6-2.

Pozzi, who holds a No. 62 world ranking and boasts a win over No. 2 Marcelo Rios this summer, used his deep forehands to force Santoro into numerous errors from the baseline.

Casagrande denies taking drugs

ROME (AFP) — Top Italian rider Francesco Casagrande emerged from a grilling by anti-drugs officials here saying that he had a clear conscience about his two dope test failures.

Casagrande, the winner of this month's San Sebastian Classic and ranked No. 5 five in the world, was hauled before the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) after showing high levels of testosterone in April and in May.

But he denied taking drugs and announced plans to quit his French team Cofidis, who have asked him not to race until his case is resolved.

"I have not been suspended and until a judgement is made on my case I am perfectly free to compete in any race," he explained.

"However, my current team Cofidis do not want me to."

"My intention is to change teams, because otherwise I will be missing out on some very important sporting events that are coming up."

Turning to his dope test failures, the Italian said: "I took six or seven tests and they weren't always positive. That means that my natural level of testosterone is variable."

"If I had been using banned substances, they would all have been positive," he claimed.

Casagrande, who was accompanied to Tuesday's hearing by a lawyer, said: "I am coming out of this with my head high and a clean conscience."

As for the world of cycling, which has been rocked by the drugs controversies on this year's Tour de France, he said: "It's clean."

"People who work in it do so only with the aid of personal sacrifice. Personally, I have never seen any shady people involved in this world."

Casagrande's file is due to be passed on by the anti-drugs experts to CONI's disciplinary committee, and from there to the cycling federation for a final verdict. The process is expected to take several weeks.



Fifth-seeded Thomas Muster of Austria sweeps through a backhand return to opponent Marcelo Filippini of Uruguay during first round action at the MFS Pro Tennis Championships in Brookline, Mass. Monday night. Muster went on to win, 6-0, 6-2 (AP Photo)

errors from the baseline.

"I played a solid match and by keeping the ball deep I was forcing him to miss in a lot of the baseline rallies," Pozzi said.

Third-seeded Cedric Pioline was the highest ranked player to advance.

The veteran from Paris needed only 55 minutes to sweep past Romania's Adrian Panaitescu, 6-4, 6-0.

"My ground strokes were pretty good today," Pioline

said.

"I was especially pleased because I had been concerned about my consistency lately. I was going to take the week off, then I decided I needed the work for the (U.S.) Open, so I got a wild card here."

In other first-round matches, Kenneth Carlsen of Denmark outlasted Jerome Golmard of France 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; Sebastian Grosjean of France

stopped John van Lottum of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-0; and 18-year-old Xavier Malisse of Belgium beat Steve Campbell 6-3, 6-1.

Eighth-seeded Vince Spadea was forced to withdraw Monday morning because of a sprained right wrist.

Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden and Karol Kucera of Slovakia, the top two seeds, set their first action Tuesday.

Spurs dismiss takeover talk amid speculations

LONDON (AFP) — Tottenham on Tuesday dismissed newspaper reports that Alan Sugar is having secret talks about selling Spurs.

The Guardian said that talks had begun with Rupert Murdoch, while the Daily Mail said business tycoon Joe Lewis was favourite to take over the London club.

A Spurs spokesman said there was no substance to the press speculation.

Chairman Alan Sugar is thought to be ready to sell his 40 percent controlling stake in the club after an unsuccessful seven-year reign.

The man who made millions of pounds from his computer business, Amstrad, has reportedly had enough of the personal abuse he has already endured after the team lost their first two games of the new season.

An angry mob of about 1,000 fans gathered outside the White Hart Lane ground on Saturday in protest at the 3-0 defeat by Sheffield Wednesday.

That may prove to be the final straw for the Essex-based businessman, and both Lewis and Murdoch are said to be waiting in the wings to buy him out.

Bahamas-based Lewis, reputed to be the third richest Briton alive, with a personal fortune estimated at three billion pounds (\$4.8 billion), already has a 25 percent stake in Scotland's biggest club, Rangers.

He also owns Vicenza of Italy, Slavia Prague of the Czech Republic and Greek club AEK Athens.

After pumping money into Ibrox, the 61-year-old pledged that his long-term goal was to own a club in each of the major footballing nations in Europe.

He reportedly believes Spurs would be a bargain at the moment at less than £80 million. The club's share price on Monday fell to its lowest point so far this year at 59.5 pence, valuing the north London club at barely 60 million pounds.

Considering the auction, a spade certainly looked like the right lead from the West hand, and we can sympathize with the choice of the two. Since one discard was unlikely to be enough to land the slam, dummy was forced to lead the ace of diamonds. Not surprisingly, East could not read the situation and rose with the ace, then shifted to a diamond.

Declarer made no mistake. South shot up with the ace and started running trumps. After following to the first round, West could spare a diamond and two clubs on the next three trump leads, but the penultimate trump proved to be too much.

A spade discard would promote the cable nine to the fulfilling trick; another club would set up the clubs; and the king of diamonds would establish declarer's queen. Just one of those run-of-the-mill slams that romp home with the greatest of ease.

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'Sydney 2000 Olympics will be safest on record'

SYDNEY (AFP) — Counter-terrorist measures in Australia are among the best in the world and the Sydney 2000 Olympics will be the safest on record, the Games' security commander said on Tuesday.

"We have the structure, the plans and the skills in place to deal with any incident," said Peter Ryan, also New South Wales Police Commissioner.

Since Sydney's Hilton Hotel was bombed in 1978, counter-terrorist activities had been revised and practised so intensively that they were as good as any in the world, he said.

The bomb, an assassination attempt on a Sri Lankan politician which killed three people, was the catalyst for a national anti-terrorist plan coordinated by the Commonwealth and involving all states and territories and the national defence force. "In fact, some of our anti-terrorist activities are rated on the leading edge in terms of planning and execution," he said at a foreign correspondents luncheon.

Ryan, a Briton recruited two-and-a-half years ago to clean up a corruption-riddled NSW police force, said supporting international cooperation was the most effective means of combating the terrorist scourge. There was no guarantee attempts would not be made to disrupt the Games but "we

can ensure our intelligence gathering capabilities are world class and our response capability is flexible and fast."

"We are confident we'll provide the safest Olympics the modern world has ever seen," he said. "We want people to return home without one single war story. There is no place for terrorism at the Sydney Games."

Security, he said, would not be heavy handed nor "a castle, a moat and an armed guard approach". Instead, it will be "unobtrusive but significant and highly effective."

"Our real test will be providing a safe and friendly atmosphere."

Ryan said he was working closely with his counterparts around the world and had adopted a risk analysis that revised high risk groups almost weekly.

Earlier Tuesday, the national auditor general warned disagreement between the federal and state governments on Olympic planning and funding may be baring security preparations.

A report in the Sydney Morning Herald said the Australian National Audit Office had also warned of potential problems in anti-terrorist activities at Sydney airport after responsibilities were shifted from national agencies to the NSW police.

Gap widens at top of WTA Tour rankings

MIAMI, Florida (AFP) — There was little change in the top 10 in the WTA rankings released here Monday, but the gap between World No. 1 Martina Hingis and No. 2 Lindsay Davenport again widened to 870 points.

Davenport had moved within 500 points of Hingis in the previous week's rankings with a win over the Swiss in the finals at Manhattan Beach.

But the American did not play in Montreal last week, where Monica Seles' victory failed to move her from the No. 6 spot.

In the only change among the top 10, Romanian Irina Spirlea moved from ninth to eighth, trading places with France's Nathalie Tauziat.

France's Mary Pierce continued to climb, from 13th to 11th, while compatriot Sandrine Testud dropped three places from 14th to 17th.

1. Martina Hingis (Swi)	5641 pts
2. Lindsay Davenport (USA)	4771
3. Jana Novotna (Cze)	4720
4. Arantxa Sanchez (Spa)	3626
5. Venus Williams (USA)	3123
6. Monica Seles (USA)	2839
7. Conchita Martinez (Spa)	2396
8. Irina Spirlea (Rom)	2204
9. Nathalie Tauziat (Fra)	2161
10. Patty Schnyder (Swi)	2072
11. Mary Pierce (Fra)	1957
12. Amanda Coetzer (Rsa)	1943
13. Dominique Van Roost (Bel)	1930
14. Anna Kournikova (Rus)	1737
15. Ai Sugiyama (Jpn)	1663
16. Natasha Zvereva (Blr)	1656
17. Sandrine Testud (Fra)	1638
18. Lisa Raymond (USA)	1569
19. Serena Williams (USA)	1362
20. Iva Majoli (Cro)	1342



Sweden's Magnus Norman prepares to return to Britain's Greg Rusedski in the first round of the Hamlet Cup in Connack, NY. Rusedski defeated Norman 6-3, 6-4 (AP Photo)

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(AC 001)

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- ◆ Ability to think visually, and work under pressure.

(CR 02)

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